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# THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS



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TORONTO

# THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

OR

THE REVELATION OF JEHOVAH  
IN HEBREW HISTORY FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM BY TITUS

BEING THE WORK ENTITLED "JÉHOVAH" BY  
PROFESSOR WESTPHAL  
OF MONTAUBAN

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY  
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WITH A FOREWORD BY  
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## FOREWORD

IT is a privilege to be allowed to commend to English readers the present translation of Professor Westphal's important work *Jéhovah*. I am afraid that even the name of this distinguished French theologian is not so well known in our country as it deserves to be. But in the form in which his last valuable book is here presented to us by Mr. Du Pontet's skilful hands, I trust that it will find many readers. Both teachers and students of the Old Testament will find it practically helpful as well as inspiring and suggestive.

The reader is here supplied with a summary of the History of the Religion of Israel, based on the main outlines of the results of modern critical enquiry, but written in a spirit of real reverence, and in the deepest conviction of sincere Christian belief. It is an eminently constructive, not a destructive, work ; and this is precisely the kind of volume which in our day is greatly needed by Biblical students. It is full of "the new learning," and it makes no surrender of "the old faith."

Some of the most striking contentions in Professor Westphal's treatise will not seem equally convincing to all. But his general tone is most reasonable and thoughtful, and the systematic treatment of his main subject can hardly fail to prove intensely interesting.

I earnestly trust that the excellent translation by Mr. Clement Du Pontet will soon become well and widely known.

HERBERT E. WINTON:

*Nov.* 13, 1909.





## NOTE

*Jéhovah : les étapes de la révélation dans l'histoire du peuple d'Israël* was published in parts by Professor Alexandre Westphal, at that time a professor at Montauban, during the five years 1903-1907. In its original form the work consisted of the text of which the present volume is a translation, and of a collection of appropriate 'récits' or extracts from the Bible attached to the several chapters of the book. It was very well received in France and Switzerland, and subsequently the text and the 'récits' were published in book form in two separate volumes. A second edition was brought out in Paris in 1908. In the present English edition the extracts have been omitted, but the references in each case are given, so that the reader may consult the passages bearing upon the matter under discussion as they occur.

We might apply to our author the words used of the great Dr. Arnold of Rugby by Professor Bonamy Price, quoted in Dean Stanley's *Life*. "The historical element Arnold judged of historically by the established rules of history, substantiating the general veracity of Scripture even amidst occasional inaccuracies of detail. . . . But was this all? Is the Bible but a common book? Nothing could be further from Dr. Arnold's feeling. In the Bible he found and acknowledged an oracle of God, a positive supernatural revelation made to man, an immediate inspiration of the Spirit. . . . Whilst Arnold interpreted Scripture as a scholar, an antiquarian, and an historian, and that in the spirit and with the development of modern science, he had also placed the supernatural inspiration of the sacred writers on an imperishable historical basis . . . "

There is no need to enlarge on our author's learning, breadth of view and deeply reverent spirit. If Professor Westphal is a scholar and a thinker, he is above all a Christian and a man of faith, as truly as those Bible heroes he loves and admires as the real "men of God." Let me add that after some years of practical experience of teaching I have found Professor Westphal's book invaluable. Since its first appearance in parts, I have never prepared a Divinity lesson without its help. A conviction of its supreme usefulness to teachers and parents, and indeed to all interested in the proper understanding of the greatest of all Books, led me to undertake the present work.

The translation aims at fidelity without servility. Some of the longer footnotes have been re-arranged and printed as appendices, and one or two notes have been added containing matter not available at the time of the original publication. Headlines have been inserted on each page to serve as a very brief running analysis. My best thanks are due to the author for his unfailing courtesy, and to Professor I. Gollancz for his great kindness in revising the Hebrew words occurring in the book.

HARROW, 1909.

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# THE COMPOSITION OF THE BIBLE.

## APPROXIMATE DATES.

IN this list the capitals indicate the period to which the essential elements of a book belong. The italics denote the period to which belong either the earliest fragments of a work or the later additions which gave it its present form.

## OLD TESTAMENT.

The Canon of the Old Testament was fixed by the Jewish lawyers in three successive collections, viz.: (1) Torah, the Law (Pentateuch), edited in the 4th century B.C.; (2) Nebhiim, the Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor Prophets), completed at the close of the 3rd century B.C.; (3) Kethubim, the Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles), which seem not to have enjoyed canonical authority before the age of Jesus Christ.

### Hebrew Literature.

History. The Prophetic Tradition from the earliest times to the secession of the Ten Tribes: The original documents: Writings of Moses and Samuel, The Book of Jashar, The Book of the Wars of Jehovah, etc.

Edition completed about 860 B.C. under Jehoshaphat. 9th century

The Golden Age of Hebrew Literature. (Age of Hezekiah.) 8th century

GENESIS.

EXODUS.

*Numbers.*

JOSHUA.

JUDGES.

RUTH.

1 SAMUEL.

2 SAMUEL.

1 KINGS, I-XII.

*Psalms.*

AMOS 760 B.C.

HOSEA. 750

ISAIAH. 740-690

MICAH. 725

JOB. after 722

DEUTERONOMY. after 722

SONG OF SONGS.

*Psalms.*

PROVERBS.

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The Last Writings before the downfall of the Hebrew nation. (Age of Josiah.)	7th century	NAHUM. 650 JEREMIAH. 626-580 ZEPHANIAH. 630 HABAKKUK. 608 1 KINGS, XII-XXII. 2 KINGS. about 586
Messianic Prophecy in Judah after the catastrophe.		SECOND ISAIAH. 570-540 (CHAPS. XL-LXVI.)
<b>Jewish Literature.</b>		
The founder of Judaism in Babylonia.		EZEKIEL. 592-570
The Exile (586-536 B.C.).	6th century	OBADIAH. LAMENTATIONS. <i>Psalms.</i> <i>Proverbs.</i> <i>Leviticus</i> , XVII-XXVI.
History. Priestly Tradition from the earliest times to the laws of the second Temple.		<i>Genesis.</i> <i>Exodus.</i> LEVITICUS. NUMBERS. <i>Deuteronomy.</i> <i>Joshua.</i>
Ritual Law, the Levitical Chronicle, and the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah.	5th-4th centuries	1 CHRONICLES. 2 CHRONICLES. EZRA. NEHEMIAH.
Final composition of our present Pentateuch. The edition complete about 350 B.C.		HAGGAI. 520 ZECHARIAH, I-VIII. 520 JOEL. 450 MALACHI. 440 ZECHARIAH. IX-XIV. 300
The Prophets of the Jewish Restoration.		PSALMS.
The Hymnal of the Jewish Temple.	5th-2nd century	ESTHER.
Jewish Exclusivism.	4th century	JONAH.
Universalist Reaction.	4th century	ECCLESIASTES.
Jewish Philosophy.	3rd century	DANIEL.
The Apocalypse for the Persecuted Jews.	3rd and 2nd centuries	

## NEW TESTAMENT.

The Canon of the New Testament was fixed in 360 A.D. at the Synod of Laodicea. *Revelation* was added to it in 365 A.D. by Athanasius. The new Canon was finally sanctioned, with Augustine's support, by the Council of Carthage in 398 A.D.

**Christian Literature.**

Letters of the Apostle Paul :	A.D.		
First Missionary Journey.	49-51		A.D.
Second Missionary Journey.	52-55	1 THESSALONIANS.	53
		2 THESSALONIANS.	53-54
		GALATIANS.	55
Third Missionary Journey.	56-58	1 CORINTHIANS.	
		Easter, 56 or 57	
		2 CORINTHIANS.	
		Autumn, 57	
		ROMANS.	58
Imprisonment at Caesarea.	58-60	EPHESIANS.	
		COLOSSIANS.	58-60
		PHILEMON.	
Imprisonment in Rome.	61-63	PHILIPPIANS.	62-63
Second Imprisonment in Rome ?		1 TIMOTHY.	64 ?
	64-65 ?	TITUS.	64 ?
		2 TIMOTHY.	65 ?
Letter of James, the Lord's brother.		JAMES.	about 60
Letter of the Apostle Peter.		1 PETER.	after 60
Letter to the Hebrews.		HEBREWS.	after 64
The earliest Gospels :			
Mark, disciple of Peter.		MARK.	65
Matthew, the Apostle.		MATTHEW.	66
The Books of Luke the physician,		LUKE.	70-75
disciple of Paul.		ACTS.	70-80

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The Books of the Apostle John, at this time almost a centenarian, according to Jerome.	1 JOHN.	80-85
	JOHN (GOSPEL).	finished about 85-90
	2 and 3 JOHN.	90-95
The Apocalypse for the Persecuted Christians.	REVELATION.	68 and 96
Second Letter of Peter.	} unknown in the 2nd century, disputed in the early Church.	2 PETER. ?
Letter of Jude.		
	JUDE.	?



## INTRODUCTION

“THE unrest produced in the Church by past struggles, and continued during many years, has not been in vain. It may not have transformed theology so completely as was expected, but still the old traditional framework of ideas has been shaken. Little by little, the gulf has widened between the teaching of the churches and the theology of the schools; the day is coming when Faith and Criticism will dispute the field, each with a Bible of its own.”<sup>1</sup>

These words seem no less true now than when they were written twenty years ago. In every conference or synod dealing with Christian education, the most pressing question is always the proper teaching of Bible History. To many clergymen the problem causes acute torment, and we may readily understand their feelings. When a man has a cure of souls and is anxious to teach the truth faithfully, it is a sore trial for him to come to a parting of the ways in theological thought. And this is what in fact has come to pass with regard to the Old Testament. The success of the historical method in Biblical criticism, the discoveries of Assyriology, and the birth of the science of religion have so deeply impressed the modern mind, and cast such a flood of light on Biblical knowledge, that it is now no longer possible to entrench ourselves in the old positions which were the unassailable strongholds of a past generation of apologists.

Secondary education is striving to develop in our young people a proper historical sense. The manuals of Ancient History,—very different from our books on Bible History,—published for our great schools by the most distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Westphal, *Sources du Pentateuque*, 1888, vol. i.

Oriental scholars, are producing in the rising generation an attitude of mind which lays the most serious duties on all religious teachers. The "pastor" must ask himself whether he wishes to keep or to lose the intellectual confidence of his pupil. If he loses it, his influence goes too: but to retain it, there is nowadays one essential condition; viz. to do in the interest of our heavenly home what we do every day to protect our native country here below; in other words, to keep on renewing our defences.

Before we can teach Bible History, we must revise it.

The times are ripe for this revision. The main points for essential change are settled, the discussion of principles is closed, and the Church is weary of our interminable disputes on matters of detail. We are accused of caring little for its real needs and of following our German masters in the pursuit of the enervating pedantries of a science of minutiae, which is over-critical of trifles and refuses to acknowledge the smallest Biblical document till it has discovered in it half-a-dozen separate sources and as many interpolations. The complaint is made that the fetish of grammar has stifled our respect for general views and inner meaning; and we are referred for a pattern to that true Christian, the founder of modern theology, John Calvin, whose penetrating and racy exposition, while not neglecting detail, never loses sight of the whole, takes a fair account of the things of the spirit, and combines explanation with edification. Without regretting the possible excess of our scientific scruples, we may plead guilty to having allowed them a little too much weight. We have perhaps not been sufficiently *Christian* in our attitude towards a literature whose deepest secrets only those can read who have themselves surrendered their own hearts to Him whom Luther called "The Master of the Scriptures." "There are abundant signs," it has been said, "that we are sailing on the wrong tack with our rage for analysis, our blind trust in documentary evidence, and our claim to explain life by lecture-theatre dissections. It is a good thing, no doubt, that the vast inquiry, now continued through half a century, should have been instituted. It is a good thing to have sifted all the notions inherited

from the past, and to have deeply stirred the old soil before sowing it. Let us not be ungrateful to our masters, who devoted prodigious ability, one might even say genius, to this task. But abuse of their methods does more harm than good. The cry of the modern world is for *reconstruction*: and this must rest on a basis of simple ideas. In religion no less than in ethics and politics, in history and literature no less than in art, the demand is that we should make great constructive lines out of the crowd of isolated points with which our eye has been too easily satisfied."

It is clear, we must reconstruct.

If, then, we are to lay down afresh the main guiding lines of Bible History, since in such a task science can help faith and faith science, we shall do well to begin with a preliminary investigation of the respective claims of these two principles. Let us call them, for want of a better definition, the *Postulate of Faith* and the *Postulate of Science*.

### *The Postulate of Faith.*

What appears most striking and most disconcerting to a believer who inquires into the results of modern criticism, is that its first effect is to destroy root and branch the unity which from his childhood he had been taught to see in the doctrinal teaching of the Old Testament. His general notion of the trend of events had always been: The Creation, the Fall, the Call of the Patriarchs, the Covenant with Jehovah at Sinai, the revival of the Covenant by the Prophets, the Messianic prophecies, and finally, the advent of the Messiah Jesus. Now, however, he is told that science has changed all this, that the opening narratives of *Genesis* are myths common to all Semitic nations, that the Patriarchs never existed, that Moses did not believe in one only God, that Jehovah was a local deity worshipped in the neighbourhood of Sinai, that the monotheistic idea was born in the consciences of the Prophets, etc., etc. All this comes upon the believer like a mine exploding and shattering the whole structure of Revelation and leaving in its place a heap of shapeless ruins. Anxious above all to preserve his belief in the divine scheme of salvation, he

indignantly and summarily rejects the whole of the scientific paraphernalia, which, he suspects, cover nothing but a dangerous mass of unbelief.

But let us suppose that a believer, sufficiently well informed to be proof against deception, takes the trouble to draw up an account of the various solutions which criticism offers. He knows by personal experience and observation of the religious life of his fellows, that the Bible, though apparently written like other books and liable like the rest to the accidents peculiar to works of this kind, is in reality the Book through which God speaks to men whose hearts are honest and good. In this book he has found Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ has given him new life, has become the fountainhead of his energy and the centre of his affections, and is for him the one great reality of history. It is from the standpoint of this reality that he must estimate the historical value of the facts which are supposed to have prepared the world to receive and understand it.

Jesus declared that He was the Messiah foretold by the Prophets; He said that He was come to fulfil them, and explained their words to a people who had ceased to understand but still fervently believed them. Belief in Christ therefore involves a belief in the three great centuries of prophecy, in the Messianic preachers, and in the moral and religious revolution of which they were both the heroes and the victims. Do the Prophets pose as religious innovators? No. Do they preach morality in the name of conscience? Do they preach it as the same for all, in the name of the universal moral law? No. Evil appears to them as sin; sin, as being disobedience to Jehovah. Their preaching does not overstep the frontiers of the people whose duty it is to obey Jehovah. *The moral sin of Israel* is a breach of a *religious* covenant. That is a peculiarity, the importance of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. Now, is this covenant, against which Israel rebels, without however denying or repudiating it, concluded through the agency of the Prophets? Is this Jehovah, Whose champions they are, first revealed by them? There is not a line or even a word to support such a theory. The whole history

## THE PROPHETS AND THE COVENANT 5

of the Israelite monarchy proves that the belief in Jehovah and the covenant of the Hebrews with Him existed long before the Prophets started on their mission. Their first appearance on the scene shows most conclusively that, so far from being innovators, they rest their claim to recognition solely on the fact of that covenant and the authoritative weight of that belief. In other words, the work of the Prophets, from Samuel to Malachi, presupposes an event, a divine revelation, a religious institution, which it did not produce and does not explain, but by which, on the contrary, it is called into being and needs itself to be explained. So, then, we are compelled by historical necessity to uphold the great reformation to which Moses has given his name, and which the Pentateuch, the historical books, and the *Psalms* agree in regarding as the turning-point in the history of the Hebrews.

What were the historical antecedents and connexions of this people, this man and this God, meeting on the slopes of Sinai to draw up a moral and religious constitution, which was destined to be the charter of civilized humanity? I am well aware that the storm-theory is a favourite device in the science of religion, to explain the origin and the various manifestations of the religious instinct, and that it has been found expedient even to explain the removal of Elijah by saying, "Elijah died a victim of his predilection for storms." But I question whether explanations of this kind appeal to all minds, and I do not fancy that a few claps of thunder, however powerful, could have sufficed to suggest to Moses the composition of the Decalogue or to invest him with sufficient authority to enforce its acceptance! It is not likely—there is no similar case in the history of nations—that, if the worship of Jehovah had been found by Israel in some strange valley, or even if Jehovah had been the God of Jethro, this would have seemed to the Hebrews a sufficient reason to abandon their protecting Elohim and to devote themselves to an unknown and formidable deity appearing at first with no other purpose than to chastise. For after all, the peculiarity of Jehovah, from His first appearance, is to command and to strike mercilessly when disobeyed; which

would indeed be a strange *début* for a deity without any previous record, seeking to supplant the old *teraphim* of Israel! If Jehovah is a borrowed deity, I fail to understand either the beginnings of His worship, or the zeal of the patriot preaching His religion, or the credulity of the people consecrating altars to Him. But if, on the contrary, under the new and suggestive name given Him by Moses' reformation, He is the same ancestral God Whose blessings are bound up with the life of the Hebrew patriarchs, and if, in the events of a supreme crisis, He has just shown Himself the deliverer of the tribes which call upon Him, then everything becomes clear and intelligible. The time is well chosen for Him to command. He has a right to obedience, and, like Osiris or Orpheus in a mythical past, like Zoroaster, Confucius or Buddha in the history of their nations, Moses appears at the favourable moment as the inspired reformer, sent by God to the refugees from Egypt, to effect the evolution of their religion towards its moral destiny and transform the Patriarchal compacts into a positive national covenant.

Thus, as Moses' reforms are necessary to the proper understanding of the Prophecies, so historical continuity requires the nomad life of the Patriarchs, the bondage in the land of the Pharaohs, the distress of the descendants of Abraham and the miraculous deliverance of the Exodus, to account for the authority of Moses and the building of the national constitution on the *Torah* (Law) of Jehovah. Jehovah's claim to belief is that He can say, "I am the Elohim of your fathers, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

There still remain the first eleven chapters of *Genesis*, apparently unconnected with the history of the Hebrews, and alleged to be a group of traditions common to all Semitic nations. Is it really a mere literary accident which has linked them to the call of Abraham, and is it a scientific duty to let them sink back again into the common heap of Oriental myths? We must remember in the first place that, as a matter of fact, no Semitic religion contains the whole of the traditions recorded at the beginning of *Genesis*. Not only are they not found

anywhere grouped in the same way, but not one of these traditions, taken by itself, is to be found, with the same precision or fulness as in the Pentateuch, in the collections of myths previous to the composition of our sacred books. All that can be said is that some of the general notions and some of the details of the beliefs recorded in them, exist as it were in solution not only in the Semitic, but also in the Hamitic and Aryan mythologies. This, in fact, would tend to prove that the persons and events of these chapters are neither the product of pure invention nor of direct revelation, but help us to focus and reconstruct traditions which elsewhere appear as a tangle of fragments, to which it is often impossible to find a clue. Secondly, if the Bible story began with the call of Abraham, the drama of salvation, of which the history of the Patriarchs is the first act, would open without anything to explain its subject, or to interest us in the plot, and the later acts would leave the riddle still unsolved. "God said": what God? "to Abraham": who is that? "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." What is the meaning of these words? What is the failure and what the hope recalled by this dark allusion? Later on, when Moses gives definite shape to the need of the covenant, and later still, when the Prophets thunder against universal evil, and finally when Jesus comes as a saving Messiah and as the Last Adam, the riddle confronts us still, its poignancy increasing with the deepening tragedy of the drama. The enigma wraps in its obscurity the redeeming Cross itself—why is the death of the Righteous expiatory? and why is Pentecost the foundation of a new humanity?

But now, on re-reading the opening pages of *Genesis*, everything is accounted for, and the data there supplied reveal the intimate and vital connexion between this preface and the subsequent history. It is there that I find all the postulates of the religion, whose evolution and revolutions unfold themselves in the lives of the sons of Abraham through successive ages down to the final triumph of the Spirit. The postulates are these: the declaration of one only God, the Creator; the making

of man in the image of the heavenly Father; the treason of free man separating himself from his divine Educator. The civilization of a fallen world is the child of Cain; the world is evil; like man, like humanity. It would be idle for God to attempt to bring back to the path of duty His creatures, fast multiplying and corrupting one another, by striking them with terror by cosmic upheavals. The stain lies deeper far, in the depths of the heart. Hence, after the dismal page which tells how the world was overwhelmed by the Flood, the artless picture of the Tower of Babel shows us an impenitent humanity still seeking to build up its own happiness without, if not against, God. But the only fruit of their labour is an incurable misunderstanding, the source of all future conflicts and weaknesses. "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."

For the present, these statements—rising out of the prehistoric darkness, and arranged in the first pages of *Genesis* in such a way as to give us the rationale of the subsequent history—yield us, as we contemplate the unfinished Tower of Babel, this solemn truth, prefacing and justifying the advances of the divine grace: the humanity of the Fall no longer understands God or itself; there is now no Father and therefore no family; the history of God and men must start again from the beginning.

After the story of the Tower of Babel, our Bibles ought to contain one completely blank page. This page would stand for those centuries during which, while the heaven was dumb and let mankind make its own experiments in the field it had freely chosen, man, following out his unhappy destiny in the midst of endless contradictions, was led through the school of trials to the elementary conversion, that is, the desire for a god. When humanity, conquered by its own powerlessness, began to pray to an *Elohim*, or heavenly protector, God, ever ready to answer the first sigh of entreaty, replied by the call of Abraham. This was the renewal of the moral intercourse which was finally to produce Christianity and realize in man, more painfully but not less surely than in Eden, the image of God.



And so, the more closely he grapples with the problem of the origin of religion, of the early history of religions and of the call of Abraham, the better the believer realizes the true unity which binds the first pages of the Bible to the story of the Patriarchs. What was reputed a handful of Semitic traditions, unconnected with the history of Israel, is really the forecourt of the Temple where God waits to teach and redeem humanity. And we may apply to this group of statements, scattered up and down in tribal traditions, and bound together in a sheaf in the prehistoric traditions of Israel, the famous dictum, "It is a mystery which nothing can explain, but which itself explains everything." The believer may go still further. "When you find in a house," said a well-known theologian, "a key which opens every door, you guess it is the master's." Similarly, these opening statements of *Genesis*, at the threshold of Hebrew history, help us so much to read all its secrets, understand its religious meaning, grasp its harmony, difficulties and redemptive purpose, that the believer cannot help exclaiming "This is the Master's key!" What if these chapters have no historical connexion with the annals of Israel? From a religious point of view, they are inseparable from them. They are there, because God wished it so, to be our introduction to the Bible story. Thus faith,—not the coalheaver's, but educated and enlightened faith, strengthened by serious study of the internal conditions of religious history as recorded in the Old Testament, and advised by the teaching of the study of comparative religion on the origin and growth of religion among other races,—this faith, I say, claims from science that it shall respect the religious element which constitutes the organic bond between all the parts of what we are accustomed to call Bible History, and also shall retain the general framework in which the documents set that history.

Since no scientific argument compels us to deny the connexion of *Genesis* i.-xi. with the doctrinal teaching of the religion of Israel, the reality of the Patriarchal period, the monotheism of Moses, or the development of the theology of the Prophets from earlier sources, we keep to these facts and

do not consider that we are putting unfair constraint on the freedom of science, by adopting the following general scheme for the history of the religion of Jehovah :

- I. *The Prehistoric Age*, or the postulates of the religion of Jehovah.
- II. *The Patriarchs*, or the *Elohistic* religion of the Patriarchs preparing the way for the revelation of Jehovah.
- III. *Jehovah revealed*, or the covenant of the Life-God with a people destined to fulfil His will and to be His witness in the world.
- IV. *The Conflict between Jehovism and Elohimism*. This is, properly speaking, the whole history of Israel. It is carried through to the final act, the capture of Jerusalem by Titus. In it we see the attitude of God's people towards the divine will ; the conflict, in word and act, of priest with Prophet ; the falling away of kings and the unbelief of the people ; and the apparent defeat of *Jehovism*, by the rejection of the Messiah, bringing with it the downfall of the kingdom which God had chosen for His witness among the nations.

The traditional treatment of Bible history not only commits the mistake of unduly compressing the history of the nine centuries from Elijah to John the Baptist. It also isolates the Old Testament from the New. Now the history of Israel without Calvary is a drama without its final act. The Passion of Jesus Christ, divorced from the centuries which led up to it, becomes unintelligible, and the horror of it appals without enlightening us. But restore it to its proper setting, and once more we see in it a concluding and crowning act with its solemn message and warning to every human conscience. By all means let us deal separately with the life of Our Lord and the Gospel, but when we teach Bible History let us beware of omitting its crowning page, heralded by all those that precede it, and in its turn supplying the key to them all.

The few short pages devoted in the present work to the Gospel are not a history. They are intended merely to

indicate, however briefly, the organic connexion existing between the actors in the Gospel drama and those of the Old Testament.

*The Postulate of Science.*

I suppose any theologian, not wedded to the extreme measures of the fashionable radicalism, will allow the believer's claim and readily acknowledge that his postulate can be granted even by scholars who do not share his faith and do not intend to allow the positive results of criticism to be stultified by religious prejudice. But science, even when pursued by theologians most strongly attached to the traditional faith, has its postulate also, and, if Christian theology is to do any good work, this postulate must be granted as loyally and seriously as the other. This postulate is that, in the examination of the materials employed in the reconstruction of Bible History, the historical method, as understood and applied by modern science, shall alone guide our decisions. In other words :

I. All the documents of the Old Testament must be subjected to a rigorous exegesis and criticism, as regards contents, date and authorship. The reconstruction of the various periods of history must be carried out according to the results of this preliminary study ; and, in the choice of materials, the first place must always be given to those authorities which are the oldest and the furthest removed from any apologetic or systematic tendency.

II. The religious terminology of the Hebrew Bible must be studied with the greatest care, and compared with that of the other non-Biblical documents preserved by contemporary history. Wherever we shall find identical expressions in those documents and the Bible, we shall not, so far as those expressions are concerned, allow any more weight to the one group than to the other.

III. The materials for each period being grouped historically and their religious terminology thoroughly understood, we must undertake, in explaining the moral or religious ideas, worship, theology or general mental attitude of one generation, not to appeal to the data or fuller knowledge of

subsequent generations. The historian, in restoring a historical period, must confine himself strictly to the documents relating to that period, explaining and completing them, wherever necessary, by the certain data which he can gather from contemporary history.

Such is the postulate of science, and it does not seem excessive. No history is possible except at this price; it would be a mistake to lower it because the history to be written is *sacred*. It may be that the application of the principles which flow from this postulate will introduce important modifications into our traditional ideas, but without doubt they will be improvements: historically, first, because with more scientific methods we shall get nearer to historical truth; and, secondly, from a religious point of view, because by putting in its proper place, through severe scrutiny, everything in the history of Israel which clearly is drawn from the personal notions of the writers or the common stock of human religion, we shall be better able to bring out, with a clearness impossible to earlier students, the facts and doctrines constituting and revealing what I may call "the divine initiative towards redemption in the history of the chosen people."

To obtain an idea of the tendency of these modifications, we may review very shortly the three points of the postulate of science:

I. Textual criticism will lead to the conclusion, for instance, that the historical books of the Old Testament, from *Genesis* to *Nehemiah*, are not, as the Rabbinical arrangement would make them, a series of sixteen or seventeen separate works, successively written by different authors, but constitute in fact two great historical sources, incessantly enlarged, enriched and lengthened, mingling their narratives in their opening pages, and both extending equally from the account of the creation of the world to the final tribulations of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The one proceeds from the fourth verse of the second chapter of *Genesis* to the end of the kingdom of Judah. It pursues its course through the oldest pages of the Pentateuch, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel* and *Kings*. It has no other purpose than purely narrative

history, *ad narrandum*, and its religious inspiration is purely Prophetic. The other, extending from *Genesis* i. through the later pages of the Pentateuch and *Joshua*, through *Chronicles* and *Ezra* to the last accounts of the Jewish Restoration, records, on the whole, the same events, but in a totally different spirit. Intent above all on rites and genealogies, it has the appearance of a book written with a purpose, *ad probandum*. Its object, which is throughout apologetic, is to show, through all the tribulations of history, how the Jews who returned from the Babylonian exile are descended from the first man, in the eldest line of descent, and really possess the right of primogeniture over the inheritance of blessings granted to Abraham, to Noah and to the father of the whole human race. In this case, the influence of the priestly attitude is felt everywhere. These annals, with their modifications, amplifications and documents welded on to them to complete and continue them, all issue from the archives of the priests. The other tradition, with all its additions, carries us back to the archives of the Prophets. I cannot dwell on this subject here. What I have said suffices, I think, to show from what point of view we must contemplate the restoration of the history of Israel, and what preponderance we must give in it to the great work resting on much fuller documentary evidence, and written long before the other, under the inspiration of the Prophets.

Similar considerations will reduce to their true proportions the significance of this or that ceremony or this or that story, the symbolical interpretation of which has often led theology astray, and will enhance the value of books on which traditional Bible History insists far too little, considering their essential importance in the religion of Israel. Such books are *Deuteronomy*, *Jeremiah*, the visions of *Ezekiel* and the Messianic prophecies put by the Rabbis at the end of the book of *Isaiah*, whereas in fact they are the culmination of all the inspired theology of the Prophets. The total result—at which the believing Church cannot but rejoice—of the labours of scientific criticism, reduced to their undisputed elements, is in the first place to confirm, and set in a clear light and in a position of unrivalled eminence, in both the

history and the literature of the Hebrews, the activity and authority of the Prophets.

II. As regards the Terminology of the Bible, readers of the Old Testament can call to mind a large number of passages in our historical books where expressions occur such as: "God said, God commanded, God fought, God was angry, God sent for," etc. At times even the name of God is perplexingly coupled with acts which our conscience instinctively disapproves, such as, for instance, the barbarous custom of wholesale massacre. What are we to think of these passages? A reader familiar with the literature of ancient religions, with the conversations between Ahura-Mazda and Zarathustra, for instance, will have no trouble in accounting for the origin of this terminology. But up to the present time, the current method of teaching Bible History has made no attempt to prevent the reader, who in the way of old religious books knows only the Bible, from thinking that in all the passages where God is directly mentioned, it is really He who speaks, commands and acts. And the believer, logical in his faith, imagines that what differentiates the Bible from other religious books and makes it the book of Revelation, is precisely that terminology which is found here and nowhere else, and which proves that God is really present since He speaks, commands, etc. If we wish to gain acceptance for our faith in Revelation from men who do not share our beliefs, it is high time we ceased to jeopardize it by a theory so childish. And for this, it will be enough to inquire into the literary conventions of non-Biblical religious documents. Here again, as before, space forbids a full discussion of the subject. I shall only adduce one proof in support of my plea by transcribing part of the inscription of Mesha, king of Moab, the contemporary of Omri, king of Israel, and a worshipper of the god Chemosh.

"I am Mesha, king of Moab. . . . I have built this high place to Chemosh because *he has helped* me against all them that attacked me and *has caused me* to behold the misery of all my enemies. Omri, king of Israel, oppressed Moab long, because *Chemosh was angry* against his land. . . . And the king of Israel had built Ataroth. I attacked this town and

took it, and I exterminated all the men of the town to *make joyful the face of Chemosh*, and I carried away the [. . .] from thence and dragged them *before the face of Chemosh*. And *Chemosh said to me*: Go, and take Nebo from Israel. And I set out by night, and I besieged that town from dawn till noon, and I took it, and killed all things, seven thousand men . . . for *I had vowed them to Ashtar Chemosh*. And there I took the vessels of the worship of Jehovah and dragged them *before the face of Chemosh*. The king of Israel built Jahaz and fortified himself there against me, and *Chemosh drove him from before his face*. . . . And *Chemosh said to me*: Go down and fight against Horonaim. . . .”

It should be difficult, after reading this document, which is contemporaneous with the events it records, for any impartial reader not to be convinced that Israel and their neighbours in writing history used perceptibly similar expressions, and that, when their historians wrote “God said,” that was simply the recognized way of expressing the firm belief that such and such a tradition had a divine origin, or that such and such an exploit was performed by the inspiration and for the glory of God. But we must distinguish carefully between these expressions of the historian recording the exploits of his people in the language of his time and giving us the ideas of that people on the relations between politics and religion and on the service of the national god, and on the other hand, the witness of a Prophet of commanding personality, who professes and proves himself to be the envoy of Jehovah, the representative of pure and spotless religion, and who, conveying a revelation which he declares he has received through supernatural means in a meeting with his God, exclaims at the risk of his life before peoples and kings, “*Thus saith the Lord!*”

The two things are very different.

The historians of Jehovah and of Chemosh may have common expressions; the peoples of Jehovah and of Chemosh may have similar political views or religious ideas resembling one another in ignorance and barbarity; but nobody stands up in Moab to exclaim, “Thus saith Chemosh!” and revolutionize the people by preaching the true religion. Chemosh

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has no prophets ; he has no prophets, because he has no religious revelation, and he has no revelation, because he is not God. Chemosh is not God, and Jehovah is God. There is the difference. And this difference is proved not by the assertions of their historians or the identical expressions in which reference is made to them, but by the events of their respective religious histories. That is why the vocabulary of Eastern annalists cannot in any way affect our faith in the Biblical revelation, or the reality and supreme authority of the Word of God in history and in the Book. The only thing for our more enlightened religion to bear in mind is that the proof of revelation is not necessarily to be found in the formula which claims to herald it, but above all in the specific value of the thing revealed, in the divine character of the inspired word, which forces our conscience to recognize in it the expression of God's will itself. Nor let it be said that by such a statement I reduce revelation to mere subjectivism. Historically, I am merely noting an undeniable scientific fact. From the religious point of view, I uphold the correctness and universality of what the reformers, following St. Paul, have called *Testimonium spiritus sancti*. In each case, I endeavour to remain faithful to the truth. Let us beware of treating Truth and Revelation as irreconcilable opposites. If I cared at this point to plunge into the thick of controversy, I could easily quote numberless examples to show what a relief this view of Revelation has been to a crowd of sincere and sensitive men who had hitherto refused their allegiance to the Jehovah of the Hebrews, because of the horrors for which our texts make Him responsible, and who, in face of the alternative, had preferred to reject the book as barbarous, rather than sacrifice the moral character of God.

III. The third point raised by the postulate of science warns us against a common and regrettable error of writers of Bible Histories, which is to view the preparation of salvation as if the whole of Revelation were completely contained in each successive moment of its history, and as if all the authors of our sacred books had had as full a knowledge of divine truths as we now possess after three thousand or



three thousand five hundred years of religious, moral and scientific progress. For instance, should they have to explain the account of Creation, they strive to demonstrate its scientific accuracy, as if the men who wrote it had known the theories of Galileo and Darwin's Evolution. If the subject is Abraham's religion, they attribute to him the monotheism of Moses, as if God had never needed to say to Moses, "Hear, O Israel, thy God is the only God there is." In the stories of Jephthah, Samuel or Elisha, everywhere and always they assume that the men of the Old Testament were, from the outset, all equally acquainted with the moral and religious content of the revelation preached by an Isaiah or a Jeremiah, if not even by Jesus Christ and St. Paul.

What is the religious consequence of this historical heresy, this lack of perspective, which recalls the artless paintings of the earliest masters, of Cranach or of Albert Dürer? It is this, that ordinary readers are scandalized at seeing men of the Bible, who are supposed to have been taught all the will of the just and holy God, speak and behave at times like the most veritable barbarian and the most uncivilized heathen. The thoughtful reader is driven by the protest of his conscience to sum up his conclusions in the following triple proposition: Either (1) the God of Jacob, Jephthah and Samuel was not the true God; or (2), though they knew the true God, they seriously and continually disobeyed Him; or else (3) the true God was known to them only very imperfectly and revealed Himself only very gradually to the generations and heroes who were to be the landmarks of the religious history of humanity.

There is no other conclusion possible. If we admit the first, how are we to explain the evolution culminating in Jesus Christ? If we accept the second, how can we admit that the true God answered and blessed lying and disobedient servants? The third conclusion alone is admissible: in fact, we cannot avoid it. Let us endeavour now to state it in all its clearness and cogency.

When it is stated that the revelation of God in the Bible was *historical and progressive*, it is necessary loyally and courageously to take this statement in its full meaning. We

must unfold before our pupils God's method in its whole truth, that is to say, we must tell them that in the early stages of Bible history there was not a direct, immediate and adequate revelation of the true God, but an indirect and educational revelation of God, which was to the knowledge of God Himself as the shadow of blessings to come, to use a Biblical phrase, is to the glorious light of Christ, or as the milk which children enjoy is to the meat which only the adult can digest. To understand the relations of the Creator with humanity of the earliest ages, there is no better illustration than that afforded by children and the relations between the child and its mother, who, after giving it birth, feeds it, guides its first steps, brings it up and makes it into a man. When the child at its mother's breast gazes long at her face with a vaguely questioning look, what does it read there? Does it know that she who is holding it in her arms gave it life, loves it with all the powers of her soul, lives only for it, and would shed her last drop of blood to protect it? Will the mother discourse to it of all that is involved in motherhood? Surely not. She feeds it, and that is enough: it is all that it can understand. She will endure that the child, in the wild imaginations of infancy, should paint a thousand foolish pictures of her, all of them inferior to the reality; should see in her at first an agreeable object, a slave, sometimes a tyrant, but a protecting and an indispensable tyrant. Patient and sure of the future, she leaves the child to the teaching of experience and the development of its morality. Day by day, adapting herself to circumstances, she feeds it at first with her milk, then with her thought, then her feelings, then her faith, but always with her loving care. And when the initiation is complete, the sublime labour of motherhood is so well performed that the child, grown to man's estate, when kissing his mother, spontaneously puts into the words "My mother" all his heart's treasure of gratitude, admiration and love.

Not unlike this, in its sublime process of education, is the great work of Redemption, which took fallen man out of the darkness of animal existence and educated him, by an organic initiation which did not infringe his new-born liberty,

up to the spiritual coming of age and emancipation of a son of God. God does not work by magic ; nor does He desire a slavish devotion. He does not wish to break that for whose creation He created all nature, namely man's liberty. He therefore undertakes the education of that liberty, without ever violating it. He simply feeds it, and, adapting Himself to the circumstances of its growth, puts in its path the experiences necessary to create in it a wish for further growth and higher aspiration. More than this, God, grappling with fallen humanity, had a work to undertake which was not only an education but a rescue. Fallen man had fallen so low that the divine education could not stoop down to him without first surrendering its divine glory. It is not possible to pick up a wounded man struggling in the mud without something of it at first bespattering the rescuer's clothes. Hence the very special difficulties of the inevitable humiliation for the sake of effecting the initiation of mankind. God, in His love, consented to them. He allowed Himself, at the outset, to be served by men who had no more than caught a mere glimpse of Him. He accepted a homage which put Him no higher than the nature-deities. Jehovah did not send down the fire of heaven on those of His worshippers who, thinking they served Him, dishonoured His glory, any more than Jesus did on the houses of the Samaritans who misunderstood Him. Like the child's mother, He consented to be regarded at first as a useful, indispensable thing : a feeder, protector, counsellor, pursuing through all the vicissitudes of the divine education the work of triumphant care, until the completion of the initiation into sonship should lead fallen man not only to desire a God, to desire Him strong, just and holy, but to desire Him as a Redeemer, and to pray for His coming in the guise of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

Viewed thus in its truly educational aspect, the history of the preparation of Salvation appears in a light which obliterates its internal contradictions and extends its scope to the whole of humanity. It does this, because it teaches us that the religion of Israel is the leaven of divine revelation in human theology ; it teaches us that the divine method is

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composed of respect for human liberty and a desire to act upon men in no other way than through human agents. This being so, instead of raising an outcry when Jacob tells a lie, or Samuel hews Agag in pieces, or Elisha incites Jehu to horrible slaughter in the name of Jehovah, we shall see in facts like these only a fresh proof of the infinite patience of the divine Educator. We can worship His Providence and repeat to ourselves, "See what great love the Father showed towards us that, to restore His likeness in us, He deigned to co-operate with his own creature and to employ such miserable instruments for His glory." "O faithless and perverse generation," said Jesus at the moment of crowning His work, "how long shall I endure you?" And, out of love, He endured until death.

This view of the Bible History also restores to it its external harmony with universal history, by making the whole of human history a history of Redemption. Bible History is human history. The Mediator, Who answers the longings of mankind on the Cross, is the same Who, from the beginning of unhappy humanity, excites those longings, deepens and purifies them and directs them towards the Cross. Why distort history by breaking up the religious unity of human souls by such artificial divisions as (1) humanity and false gods, (2) humanity and the true God, (3) humanity and Jesus Christ? Human life is more organic, and the divine mercy more universal. Abraham is not a beginning, but much rather a culmination. And who prepared his Chaldaean birthplace, but the Educator Who was waiting for Abraham, to lead humanity through him to better destinies? Then there is the Egyptian cradle of Moses, the Mazdaean environment of the exiles in Babylon, and even the Mithraic and Roman environments to help the spread of Christianity. Was it blind chance which put these in the path of the heralds of Truth, or should we not rather hail in them the work of Him "who makes all things work together for the good of them that love God"? The coming of Jesus Christ was not a beginning of the work of Redemption: it is the beginning of the Son's Passion, that is all; in other words, the last act of the drama of Redemption.

Let me make a clean breast of it. I like to picture to myself Him by Whom all things were made for the glory and pleasure of His Father, the Son Himself labouring from the fatal moment of the Fall, to reconquer for His Father the creation which has been groaning and sighing ever since it fell into its mysterious slavery to Satan. Peter says that the "spirit of Christ" stirred the Prophets to seek out beforehand the sufferings of Jesus and the glory which was to follow them; Paul writes in a bold metaphor, that Christ was the rock which followed Israel in the desert and quenched his thirst with a spiritual drink; John identifies Jesus with the Word, which from the beginning was the light of men, the true light which lightens every man that comes into the world, until the day when appearing among its own people, it was made flesh and showed itself in the form of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. Do they not all three agree in asking us to see in Him "to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth," in our Saviour Jesus Christ, the active principle of Eternal Providence, and the Redeeming Messiah Who, from the start, attracted humanity, setting it on the road to God, drawing near to it and drawing it near to Himself till the day when in the mists of the future His form was dimly descried and hailed by the first seers of Israel? Pascal says in his *Pensées*, "Jesus will be in agony till the end of the world; we must not sleep during that time." We may say with equal truth: Jesus has been in agony since the beginning of the world, and He has not ceased to watch, to prepare the moment when He could come and Himself win that victory in the world which, in His own words, shall make Satan fall from heaven "like lightning." St. Paul wrote: "God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself." We may say with equal truth: Christ was in Elohim, then in Jehovah, stirring the human conscience, and enduring everything to make man learn of God, and stimulating in the heart of humanity the religious impulse which was to produce Hebrew Prophecy, whose highest transport finds expression in the Messianic appeal, "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!" This cry was for the Son as it were a

summons to remove every veil and reveal the Saviour-God.

The day when Prophecy presented to the souls awaiting the "consolation of Israel" a Messiah suffering and dying for the sins of His brothers—that day, the age-long conflict between the love of God and the liberty of man reached its conclusion. The food of the strong adult could now take the place of the child's milk. Nothing was wanted but the revelation of the Word to transform animal into spiritual man. The Son could come and take possession of His kingdom and re-create a divine humanity by Calvary and Pentecost. The initiation had borne its fruit. From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained the stages were complete, and Bible History had run its course.

#### NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION.

The Text used in the quotations throughout the present work is that of the Revised Version. But in order to throw more light on a point which has hitherto been allowed to remain particularly obscure, mainly through the fault of Translators, the name of the Life-God, JEHOVAH (rendered in the Revised Version "the LORD"), has been restored in the present work, wherever it appears in the original texts, at any time subsequent to the day when God revealed Himself to Moses under that name (cf. *Exod.* iii. 13 and vi. 3).

The covenant with Abraham was concluded by God under the name ELOHIM. I shall therefore give this name to the divine Protector of the Patriarchs wherever the proper understanding of the narrative renders it necessary. In all other places, as for instance in the chapters dealing with the Pre-historic age, I shall retain the usual titles as they now stand (*e.g.* God, the LORD God, the LORD, God Almighty, etc.), without attaching to them any other meaning than what belongs to every general designation of the person of God. One exception I deemed advisable. In the long extract dealing with the account of the Flood, I have kept the ELOHIM and JEHOVAH of the original texts, simply because, although the use of the name JEHOVAH in such a context is strictly speaking an anachronism (God not being known by

## HARMONIZATION OF DOCUMENTS 23

that name until the time of Moses), yet in this particular case the exact names used are all-important for the purpose of distinguishing and disentangling the two interwoven narratives, whose differences are there under discussion.

I have written JEHOVAH, rather than JAHVEH or JAHVE, because I endeavoured to adopt only such changes as were absolutely imperative. The form JEHOVAH is conventional. We are not here concerned to know whether JAHVEH is (as I incline to think) more agreeable to the probable etymology of the word: JHVH. I would merely observe (1) that the origin of JHVH is disputed and the pronunciation of it lost; and (2) that in the case of names the Hebrew pronunciation of which is perfectly well known, we commonly agree to employ forms which completely transform it; *e.g.* Moses, Jerusalem and Joshua or Jesus. This being so, I have not cared to cause confusion by breaking with the tradition which since the time of Leo X. has rendered JHVH by JEHOVAH.

### *The Harmonization of the Documents of the Old Testament.*

The name JEHOVAH was unknown before the time of Moses. The expression "the Lord, God Most High" (JEHOVAH EL ELYON), in *Genesis* xiv. 22, is only one of many instances where the compiler has endeavoured to harmonize two distinct traditions. This harmonization, or conciliation of contradictory texts or tendencies, may arise in either of two ways. It may come about in the oral tradition, and be due to the innate hankering for unity in the human mind. In this case, when the writer approaches the task of recording the events of the past, the work of unification is already done. He merely sets down what he finds without criticism. In some such way arose the notion that Abraham worshipped Jehovah, and that El Elyon was Jehovah Himself. At other times the harmonization is carried out by an historian who has before him two traditions, dealing with the same facts but differing in spirit and language; and who sets to work to make each of them complete the other and to bring out their fundamental unity.

This is the harmonization which we find carried out with much care and ingenuity in the present text of our Old Testament.

Old Testament history was contained in a twofold record, and in its present form combines the narratives of the Prophetic Tradition and those of the Priestly Tradition. In order to reduce these two traditions to a single continuous and coherent narrative, the compiler has been constantly compelled to step in with discreet transitions and delicate finishing touches. His sole object is to reconcile and unify. Sometimes his intention is to guide the reader. For instance, in *Genesis* ii., in order to combine the texts in which God is called Elohim with those in which He is called Jehovah, he is careful throughout the whole of one narrative to write Jehovah-Elohim (the Lord God), so as to show that the two names represent the same Deity. At other times he seeks to give the preponderance to the Priestly Tradition, wherever the two are incompatible. Thus, in the account of the descendants of the first man, the compiler, who is himself a priestly writer, being profoundly convinced of the accuracy of the priestly genealogy (*Genesis* v.), and not finding any mention of Seth in the Prophetic Tradition, does not hesitate to add a gloss, to repair what to him was certainly a mere omission, and inserts the two verses, *Genesis* iv. 25 and 26, whose non-*Jehovist* character is sufficiently proved by the use in such a context of the name Elohim.

If we would understand and hope to solve the critical problems of the Biblical text, we must remember that it combines three different series of documents:

(1) Those of the Prophetic Tradition, viz.: the *Jehovist* (J), the *Second Elohist* (E), and supplementary *Jehovistic* texts from diverse sources.

(2) Those of the Priestly Tradition, viz.: the *First Elohist* (oftener called the Priestly Code, P), the *Sinaitic* code (*Deuteronomy*, D), and supplementary *Elohistic* texts from various sources.

(3) Texts intercalated by the final redactor: glosses, additions, transitions, etc., in which the historian, in his eagerness to explain and instruct, has shown a marvellous



talent for harmonization.<sup>1</sup> It is to this talent that we owe the unity of our present Biblical text, and the fact that the reader, in search of edification only, can peruse *Genesis*, *Exodus* and the following books, without suspecting the diversity of their sources, and as if they were each the work of a single author (see Chronological Table on pp. xxv.-xxvi.).

*Explanation of the Names of the Documents.*

The *Jehovist* (J) is so called from its use of the name Jehovah. The *Elohist* is so called from its use of the name Elohim. But closer inspection revealed the existence of differences within the *Elohist*. This document was accordingly divided into two, the *First* and *Second Elohist*s. The *Second Elohist* is closely akin to the *Jehovist*, and differs from it only in unimportant respects. It is represented by the letter E. The *First Elohist*, on the other hand, differs greatly from both J and E, and from the fact that it contains most of the legislation, including elaborate regulations for the priesthood and religious ceremonial, it is commonly called the *Priestly Code*, and is known as P. The name *Deuteronomic* document, or D, explains itself.

*Caution.*

The terms *Elohism* and *Jehovism*, which play so important a part in the present book, must not be confused with the similar terms employed in the purely textual criticism of Biblical literature, viz. *Jehovist*, *1st Elohist*, *2nd Elohist*. The names *Elohism* and *Jehovism* must be understood in a purely historical and religious sense, to represent the two opposite conceptions of God, which continued side by side throughout the history of Israel. The one, *Elohism*, was the natural, popular and primitive religion of the Patron-God (Elohim). The other, *Jehovism*, was the revelation through the ministry of the Prophets, the religion of the Living God (Jehovah).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 34-40, for an account of these documentary sources. See also Westphal, *Sources du Pentateuque*, vol. ii. "Le problème historique."



## *PART THE FIRST.*

### THE PREHISTORIC AGE

OR

### THE POSTULATES OF THE RELIGION OF JEHOVAH.

#### INTRODUCTION.

THE narratives dealing with the origin of the world and mankind are contained in the first eleven chapters of *Genesis*. Scattered up and down among the traditions of primitive religions are to be found so many of the details of the accounts before us, that we feel compelled to assign them, at any rate in their main outlines, to the earliest traditions of the whole human family. As regards form, they wear the naive features of man's infancy. Considering the remoteness of the past they portray, in pictures whose details elude the keen gaze of historical research, it is impossible to give a definite verdict on their relation to the facts of history. But it is equally impossible to deny their close connexion with the experience of humanity in general and of the chosen people in particular. The whole religious and theological history of Israel presupposes the state of affairs described in the religious, moral and social narratives of the first eleven chapters of *Genesis*.

We must then regard these accounts as the landmarks of the prehistoric age; and with what admirable precision Providence has assigned them their places in the Bible! No

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other book of antiquity sets forth in language so precise and so restrained the primal truths which it was necessary for man to know in order to understand whence he comes and whither God is leading him. These truths are the postulates of the scheme of Redemption, and these postulates, in which are solved the human mind's most difficult and most harassing problems, are stated by means of examples so clear, so simple, and so striking, that the least cultivated intelligence can understand and profit by them. It is clearly the Divine Educator Who speaks and Who creates, out of the scattered and confused traditions of the nations, a Revelation for His chosen people.

Let us examine these postulates in the narratives in which they are set forth :

1. The Creation.
2. The Fall.
3. Cain and his Descendants, or The Children of the Fall.
4. The Flood.
5. The Tower of Babel.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE CREATION.

#### GENESIS I.-II. 3.

THE account of the Creation, as contained in the first chapter of *Genesis*, is derived from a work which appears not to have been compiled before the return from the Babylonian captivity, that is to say, the fifth century B.C. ; and owing to this late origin, it has often been refused a place among the authentic sources of the primitive theology of Israel. It is quite clear that in its present form, with its division into seven days, it is not anterior to the priestly period in which the sabbatical idea had pervaded and moulded the whole religious system, adapting days, sacrifices, feasts, years, jubilees, and even the work of Creation itself, to the number of the days in the week. But careful study of the structure of the narrative has shown that this adaptation is no more than a re-modelling of a more ancient text, probably forming one continuous whole with the story of the Fall, in which the Creation is completed, not in six acts, but in eight commands, the first of which has been preserved entire. "God said : Let there be light ! and there was light."

Creation by command, that is by the Word, is the highest form which the notion of Creation assumes in any religion. We find it already recognized among the Egyptians. It is this form which gives their purest expression to the spiritual power and moral personality of the Creator. In the theology of India, the universe emanates from the thought of God : this is the theory of Pantheism. According to the Chaldaeans,

on the other hand, it is built up step by step by the efforts and often conflicting and uncertain experiments of a number of gods, and is the result of arbitrary exertions of will. Here, on the contrary, it is one single God who speaks. His word gives life and unfolds creation according to the grand design previously determined by His wisdom.

To constitute the actual world, the scene of man's birth and supremacy, the Creator has before Him as His material merely a void (*thohu-wabohu*, which means "waste and void"), and an abyss (*tehom*), disorder and night. The first step is to reduce them to order. The Creator's work, according to the view which underlies the narrative of *Genesis*, is accomplished in three acts, which, as has been well said, respectively build the house, furnish it, and provide it with the occupant for whose use it has been prepared. The first act, in three commands, creates :

- (1) Light.
- (2) The distinction between the heavens and the earth.
- (3) The separation of the dry land and the sea.

Here we have the dwelling-place, the framework of life. Now for the conditions.

The second act, in two commands, creates :

- (1) Vegetation (as food-supply).
- (2) The cycle of days and fruitful seasons.

All is now ready for the reception of life. Living beings may now appear and will find sustenance. The third act gives the dwelling-place its inhabitants, by means of three commands proceeding, so to speak, from the circumference to the centre of animal creation, from aquatic creatures to man :

- (1) Fishes and birds.
- (2) Domestic animals, etc.
- (3) Man, supreme end and king of creation.

'And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.'

Observe that the priestly compiler, in order to embrace in six days the eight creative acts enumerated above, has been obliged to include two which are rather dissimilar in the third day, and again two more in the sixth. The days in question are not, as has been so gratuitously asserted, periods,

but undoubtedly working days, each with a morning and an evening. We have here the framework of the week at the end of which the worker, tired with his work, takes his rest. By God resting we may understand that since the appearance of man, made in the image of God, God has ceased to enrich nature with the creation of new forms. Be that as it may, it was not God's sabbath which originated the human sabbath; rather, it was the Semitic institution of the week (the word *sabbath* is found in use among the Chaldaeans) which led Jewish theology to picture the activity and the rest of the Creator under this form. If proof be needed that the observance of the sabbath is not necessarily connected with any rest of the Creator, one of our two versions of the Decalogue assigns to it entirely different motives (cf. *Deut.* v. 14-15).

The Biblical narrative of the Creation is the only one, in the whole range of primitive religious literature, which offers us a logical explanation of the beginning of things. Historically, it has as its starting-point the Chaldaean cosmogony, which was no doubt preserved in the family of Abraham, and which we recognize in a tradition strikingly analogous to our own, though in every respect inferior to it and fundamentally polytheistic. Of the narrative of *Genesis* itself there have been numerous imitations, the most important of them in the religion of Persia, where it re-appears, at least indirectly, in the *Avesta*. True respect for the narrative of *Genesis* forbids us to imperil its value by apologies which would make of it the fore-runner of our modern cosmogonies. No doubt, the general order which it attributes to Creation has been confirmed by the discoveries of science, but still we look in vain in it for any conception of all the gradual development brought to light by geology; and in its view, as in that of the Chaldaean *Genesis*, the waters above are separated from the earth by a kind of heavenly vault which God opens or closes, according as He wishes or not to send down the rain.

The historical value and spiritual intention of the narrative must be sought elsewhere. The truths it inculcates are of quite a different category, and may be thus summed up:

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(1) The whole of Creation is the work of one only God, Who exists apart from His work and Who creates even the light; a teaching quite opposed to that of all natural religions.

(2) Creation is conceived as following a consistent plan, the end and object being the advent of Man.

(3) Man, however closely allied to nature, is destined to rise above it and to found, in the midst of nature, a kingdom distinct from it, the kingdom of the sons of God. God blesses him, gives him power over all flesh and the dominion over the whole creation, because He has created him after the pattern of His own divine nature, with one end to strive after, resemblance to his Creator.

Of all the contradictory hypotheses devised by philosophy on the origin of the religious instinct, not one is comparable to the explanation offered on the first page of the Bible. Man is religious because he was made after the image of God, because he is like a child seeking his father. The religious instinct is, above all, a filial instinct. To the question of the moralists, why the human conscience is irresistibly attracted by goodness, the answer is clear, if we accept the postulate of *Genesis*. Child of God, created after the image of God, man has as the object of his existence the realization of the divine nature. It is his duty, and his instinctive, or let us say, inherited craving, like the force of heredity impelling the offspring to follow in his parent's footsteps. The origin of the moral sense is the primordial obligation of resemblance to God.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE FALL.

GENESIS II. 7—III. 24.

IF God be good, how comes it that we see so much suffering and evil in the world? This objection, repeated in all ages and day by day, is a direct indictment of the moral character of the Creator, and admits of no answer, if we either do not know or fail to learn the lesson of the story of the Fall. The purpose of this story, which most probably in the original work was a sequel to that of the Creation in eight commands, is not to explain the origin of evil, which is older than man and beyond our ken, but to impress upon us the truth that the world, as we know it, is not the world intended in the original creation and that the humanity whose progress is the theme of history is not normal humanity. Having demonstrated the activity of God creating order and harmony and concluded that everything was "very good," the inspired writer now introduces the activity of man and explains how this activity, by taking a wrong direction, spoilt the whole plan of God by introducing into it disorder and rebellion. Thus this second chapter is the counterpart of the first; the account of the Creation is followed by that of the counter-creation. It is important to thoroughly grasp and prove this point, if we wish to understand the whole subsequent development of the Biblical story, which is simply the working out of a process of *regeneration*.

The reality of the Fall and of the upheaval which followed it is confirmed by the only Biblical author who has thought

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out the Biblical religion, and made it into a system, viz. St. Paul in his *Epistle to the Romans* (ch. v.). It is likewise taken for granted in the discourses of Jesus, Who came "to save that which was lost," and of the Hebrew thinkers and prophets: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (*Jeremiah* xiii. 23). "How then can man be just with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (*Job* xxv. 4), etc. The narrative of the Fall, remarkable alike for literary beauty and for moral depth, belongs to the most ancient documents of Biblical literature. For a complete view of it, we must include in it chapter ii., which is not, as has been supposed, a second account of the creation contradicting the first, but an introduction to the account of the Fall itself.

The Fall is presented to us by the writer as a drama in three scenes thoroughly well connected and of finished workmanship.

### *First Scene. Genesis ii. 7-25. God and Man.*

We are to learn all that the Creator has done to ensure the happiness of His creature. Man is free; therefore communion with God his Father cannot be forced upon him. Like the son in the parable, he must be free either to stay with his Father or to leave Him; and this liberty of choice is symbolized in our narrative by the two trees. Jehovah, as we shall see later, is the Life-God. To feed on the fruit of the tree of Life is to feed on the very substance of God; in other words, to continue in communion with Him. The tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil represents the freedom of experiment, in which man, in his moral choice, substitutes for God's paternal guidance his own private judgement. No doubt, this tree offers free man the experience of good as well as of evil, but the circumstances of his situation are such that the tree of knowledge can in fact bestow only the knowledge of evil:

(1) Because, in order to know Good, man needed only to allow his conscience to develop normally in communion with God, the Supreme Good;

(2) Because evil, responding to the animal and sensuous part of man's nature, which to him was the first fundamental reality, must inevitably awaken corresponding inclinations and create irresistible temptations outside the reach of the protective communion with God.

God, knowing all this, directs all His efforts, in this first scene, to drawing man closer to Himself by the bond of gratitude and stimulating in him the sense of sonship which is to be his safeguard. He places him in an enchanting abode, created for him, Paradise, in the centre of which He plants the Tree of Life. He sets up man as king over all His creatures, and gives him "an help meet for him." To protect him against the risks attending his new-born liberty, He informs him that he is to keep the garden (which fact presupposes the possibility of an assailant) and forewarns him of the mortal danger there would be for him in eating of the Tree of Knowledge. Man is still too young to understand what the world is, and that evil is already realized therein, and that he himself cannot possibly dispense with the divine protection without running a thousand risks. He knows only this, that God is his Father, and that he has received everything from Him. If only he obeys like a good child, evil will have no power over his liberty: his morality will be safe, because his religion is sound.

*Second Scene. Genesis iii. 1-13. God, Man, and the Serpent.*

The third actor is the mysterious Tempter in whom Biblical theology was not slow to recognize Satan. This scene is intended to present the counterpart of the first and to emphasize the guilty conduct of Man, whose behaviour is that of an ungrateful child, in his attitude towards his two interlocutors, firstly the Serpent, whose suspicions, discreditable as they were to his heavenly Father, he ought never to have listened to, and secondly God, Who seeking repentance finds instead the obstinacy of a hardened heart. Towards both the blasphemer who flatters and the Father Who questions, man reveals himself as an unnatural child, who has admitted into his heart the three kinds of lust recalled

by 1 *John* ii. 16: the fruit of the tree was good to eat:—lust of the flesh; it was good to look upon:—lust of the eyes; it was valuable to the intellect:—pride of life. Satan once again led this miserable procession of lusts to the attack of innocence, in the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, but the Last Adam triumphed by His obedience. The First Adam betrays his Father and yields to the suggestions of evil, and from that moment, he is, so to speak, a truant from the divine school, his happiness is ruined, and his liberty cannot follow its normal development under the paternal education of God.

*Third Scene. Genesis* iii. 14-24. *God, Man, the Serpent and the Vanquisher of the Serpent.*

This scene introduces us to a fourth actor, who is not named and who appears only, so to speak, in a flash of prophecy, under the obscure designation of the *seed* of the woman, who shall bruise the head of the serpent. As the prophetic vision grew more precise, this victor, born of a woman, was given the name of Messiah; but for the present, his advent shows like a far-off promise of consolation, or like a gleam of hope hovering over the gloomy scene of the Fall and its train of fatal consequences. The terrible sentences,—increase of sorrow for the woman in her travail, toil and misery for the man in his daily labour on a cursed earth, and death of the outcasts from Paradise,—which are the conditions of the world in which we live, are in themselves neither cruel nor arbitrary. They were forced upon the Creator by respect for the liberty of the creature, and their sole object is to enable fallen man to proceed along the path on which he has freely entered and to develop his moral nature in the surroundings which he has freely chosen. The divine chastisement is not so much to punish man for his disobedience as to make possible for him the experience which will bring him back to the path of free and willing obedience. Should we, in fact, speak of it as a punishment? Would it not be nearer the truth to say that the Creator merely confirms the conditions under which man of his own free-will has placed himself in cutting himself off from his

heavenly Father, the only fountainhead of life and spiritual power?

In the midst of the natural world, in which physical pain, inseparable from the performance of functions in animal organisms, existed before the human species, Man, by communion with God, was to have inaugurated the reign of the Spirit, which would transform creation and render sorrow unnecessary. But, cut off from God and robbed of the Spirit, man has relapsed into animalism, and has himself been conquered by the suffering which he was intended to conquer, and through this failure, creation has found in its king, now become a slave, only a cause of increase of sorrow. In communion with God, man was to cultivate Paradise, extend its boundaries to the ends of the world and make of the earth the kingdom of God. But severed from God and deprived of the Spirit, man lost both inspiration and resource. It is Paradise now which will become a waste. Out of Paradise, man's efforts will produce only thorns, his talents only error and misery. Morally speaking, this is the explanation of the fact that man, son of the Fall, is a contradictory being, who feels himself bound by the commands of his conscience but incapable in practice of satisfying its demands. He desires good, but does evil. St. Paul, in the seventh chapter of his *Epistle to the Romans*, tells us the reason: "To will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not" (*Rom.* vii. 18). By communion with God, man would have triumphed over death itself. Death, before the advent of man merely a normal phenomenon of the evolution towards a higher form of organic life, was to have stopped on the arrival of the final creation, on the threshold of the realm of Spirit. By denying the Spirit, man renounced the inauguration of the reign of Life, and condemned himself to death, to a death in violation of the law of his nature, and which the Last Adam was one day to vanquish. Lastly, as for the idea of the excessive cruelty of man's banishment from Paradise, it is to be remembered that this exile, properly understood, is only a statement of the deplorable condition to which man himself had condemned himself. Man is exiled because he has already fled: his sin

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has robbed him of the divine Spirit, and his new nature spontaneously removes him from the divine communion. Our narrative says that man exiles himself of his own free choice, for he avoids the God Who seeks him, and conceals himself. The first consequence of his fault and his first punishment consist already in this, that he henceforth prefers the darkness to the light, "because his works are evil."

Thus the story of the Fall, in the inexhaustible wealth of its simple symbolism, presents the constituent elements of the law of human existence, and puts on the stage of the world, where must be evolved the destiny of the fallen creature, the four actors in the human drama ; viz. God, the Father betrayed ; Man, the disobedient son, but yet the son of God ; Satan, in the guise of a serpent, usurping power by falsehood ; and lastly the Conqueror, born of a woman, who will come in answer to the aspirations of humanity and save it by bruising the head of the serpent.

The suggestiveness and accuracy of the details of this ancient narrative, the latest recension of which belongs approximately to the ninth century B.C., are astonishing, and their prophetic value is inexplicable apart from divine inspiration. This conclusion is further strengthened by a comparison of the story with similar accounts in the literature of other religions. No ancient religion possesses an account of the Fall comparable to that in *Genesis*, but scattered here and there are hints which go to show that the Hebrew writer has done no more than arrange and restore to their proper meaning traditions preserved in a rudimentary state in all the various races of mankind. The serpent appears in all the mythologies. In Egypt, India, Persia and Chaldaea, everywhere, he represents the power of darkness and harm, the principle of evil, the genius opposed to the glory of the Deity and the happiness of men. He may be called the most ancient form in which infant humanity embodied the mysterious power of evil. Paradise, of which a confused notion belongs to every mythology which expresses any regret for a Golden Age, survives in a more distinct shape in the Aryan myths as the blessed abode of *Yima* or *Yama*,

and in Scandinavian religion as the *Midgard*. The Tree of Life is found in the myths of Tibet, in the *Vedas* of India, in Persia and especially in Chaldaea, where the earliest name of Babylon, in the pre-Semitic dialect, seems to have signified "The place of the tree of life." The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and its fatal effect on the destiny of the human race have left clear traces in the myths of India, Persia, Scandinavia and Phoenicia, but nowhere is there a more precise representation of the story of *Genesis* than on an ancient stone cylinder from Chaldaea, the original home of the early Hebrews. We see there a man and a woman wearing the Babylonian turban and seated face to face on either side of a tree, on which hang two large fruits, one in front of each, which they are stretching out their hands to pick. Behind the woman, and as tall as the tree itself, rises the serpent. Such a picture might easily serve as an illustration of the Biblical narrative of the Fall. Lastly, the fact that in the hopes of sorrowing humanity the divine Saviour of men is he who, in the words of *Genesis*, shall bruise the serpent's head, is confirmed by the universal coincidence that in all religions, from gods like Indra, Osiris or Mithra, to heroes like Hercules, he who is exalted by the adoration of mankind as a Saviour, owes his distinction to his triumph over the serpent.

Thus, although no single mythology contains the whole of the account preserved in *Genesis*, they one and all bear witness to it and testify that it accords fully with the traditions, meditations, experiences and aspirations of the human race. "My faith as a Christian experiences no difficulty in the admission that here the inspired compiler of *Genesis* has, in his account of the fall of the first human couple, made use of a narrative which among neighbouring peoples had assumed an essentially mythical character. It is not the form of the narrative that matters, but the doctrine which it conveys; and this doctrine of the fall of the human race through the wrong use our first ancestors made of their freedom of choice, is an eternal truth which nowhere else shines out with so much clearness. It furnishes the only solution of the redoubtable problem which perpetually rises

before the human mind and which no religious philosophy has succeeded in solving apart from Revelation." To this testimony of a great Roman catholic Orientalist<sup>1</sup> may be added in conclusion those of two Protestant theologians. "The Christian dogma of the fall of humanity," says M. Ernest Neville, "contains the philosophical doctrine which explains most satisfactorily to our reason the data of experience which give rise to the problem of evil." And Charles Secrétan, a Christian whom a contemporary philosopher called "the greatest French writer on metaphysics," writes thus: "For an explanation of the condition of humanity in this world which will satisfy the demands of ethical speculation, it is sufficient to allow that the Biblical tradition of the Fall expresses a historical truth" (to Secrétan, the first man was humanity): "philosophers," he continues, "who reject the Fall, do not take the trouble to account for the facts. They start with a preconceived notion. It is not, as is sometimes supposed, the idea of the Fall which turns them away from Christianity, but on the contrary, they will have nothing to do with the philosophical doctrine of the Fall, which forces itself upon any sincere and unbiased observer, because they feel that this doctrine would lead them to Christianity. But reject the Fall, and there is only one alternative: Fatalism."

<sup>1</sup> F. Lenormant.



## CHAPTER III.

### CAIN AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

#### GENESIS IV. 1-24 AND V. 29.<sup>1</sup>

THIS page of primeval history is of the highest importance. Its object is to teach us how short a time suffices to alter everything and how true is the proverb, *corruptio optimi pessima*. The first man repudiated the law of love; the second introduces the law that might is right. The first showed himself a bad son; the second is his brother's murderer. The first caused the earth to be cursed; the second causes himself to be cursed by it. The first could not remain in Eden; the second is obliged to flee very far from the divine presence, to a land of exile, where the very remembrance of God must soon be inevitably blotted out. The initial fault is followed by a deterioration rushing downwards to a final catastrophe.

The author of this dramatic narrative exhibits, *qua* historian, considerable simplicity. For instance, he cares nothing for ethnography. Cain, represented as the only man on the earth besides the original couple, is pictured immediately as living in fear of murder, marrying, building a town, and begetting sons who already in the sixth generation become workers in brass and inventors of musical instruments. The intention of the author is not to reconstruct in all its details an historical situation: his chief care is to make clear the religious genealogy of mankind and to show how Cain, the

<sup>1</sup>Textual criticism has long shown that this verse does not belong to the Priestly genealogy, but is part of the Prophetic Tradition. *Genesis* iv. 25, 26 is one of the many interpolations of the final compiler.

son in whom the consequences of the Fall bore their bitterest fruits, became the ancestor of the whole human race and the father of all the civilization realized in this world of ours. Irad, the grandson of Cain, had a great-grandson Lamech, whose descendants were the founders of the nomadic life, that is to say of the earliest Semitic community, of arts and industry. In this centre of primitive civilization was eventually born Noah, who, after the Flood, was to hand on to the new generation the inheritance of the forgotten races.

Side by side with this genealogy of Cain, supplied by one of the earliest sources of the Prophetic Tradition, the Priestly Tradition offers another thoroughly permeated with ethnological theory, the conventional character of which is obvious to any one who examines closely its figures at once precise and fabulous, its stereotyped form and the genealogical system of which this constitutes the first stage. This system, which seeks to explain in ten generations of fantastic lengths the chronology of the first ages of humanity, is not peculiar to *Genesis*. It occurs, more or less directly, in most of the great religions of antiquity, notably among Hindus, Egyptians, and especially Chaldaeans, whose ten great ancestors live much longer still than the antediluvian patriarchs of the narrative before us. The only point here to be grasped is that the Priestly Tradition knows neither the Fall, nor Cain and Abel, and connects humanity with Adam through a son, apparently unknown to the Prophetic Tradition, called Seth.

PROPHETIC TRADITION.  
(*Genesis iv.*)

Adam.  
Cain (eldest son).  
Enoch.  
Irad.  
Mehujael.  
Methushael.  
Lamech.  
Noah

PRIESTLY TRADITION.<sup>1</sup>  
(*Genesis v.*)

Adam.  
Seth (eldest and only mentioned son).  
Enosh.  
Kenan.  
Mahalalel.  
Jared.  
Enoch.  
Methuselah.  
Lamech.  
Noah.

<sup>1</sup> Judaism being the outcome of a priestly restoration, the Priestly Tradition naturally supplied the official genealogy of the Jews (1 *Chron.* i.). It is on this ground that we find it inserted in *Luke* iii.

Such are the two genealogies, in which the resemblances of names can hardly be due to chance.

The Priestly genealogy is connected with the revised account of Creation (genealogy of the heaven and the earth) exactly as the Prophetic genealogy is part of the ancient document which recounts the Fall. No historical value can be attached to the figures of the Priestly genealogy, without *ipso facto* contradicting the conditions of human existence and the duration of the antediluvian period as established by the indisputable facts of science. Considering the total absence of agreement in the chronological calculations which attempt to overcome so many insoluble difficulties and to fix, for instance, the date of the creation of the world, it is interesting to know that the most authentic and earliest account, drawn up without any idea of system, contains not a single figure relating to prehistoric times, and leaves the questions concerned with it wrapped in appropriate obscurity. The only care of the Prophetic Tradition is to bring out clearly the religious origin of humanity. On this capital point, it is possible from the very start to detect the difference of point of view which, throughout the history of salvation, separates the priest from the Prophet. To the Prophet, man is the son of Cain, and humanity is the child of the Fall. To the priest, man is a son of Seth, no allusion is made to the Fall and human history unfolds itself naturally from Adam through Seth to Noah, Abraham, Moses, from eldest son to eldest son, assuring to the theocratic nation, by right of primogeniture, the exceptional favours of God and pre-eminence over all the nations of the earth.

According as we adopt this or that standpoint, the whole religious outlook is changed. For instance, with the descent through Cain, man is a sinner, Israel is fallen, God's representative is the Prophet, the Prophet's message is conversion, his plan redemption regardless of race, his hope a suffering Messiah come to take away the sins of the world. But, with the descent through Seth, man is as he should be, Israel is in a state of grace, God's representative is the priest, the priest's worship is ritual, his plan exclusive nationalism, his hope a glorious Messiah come to deliver Israel from

all foreign tyrants and set him up as king over all his oppressors.

Seth or Cain: the two opposite tendencies, often unconsciously and confusedly, but always forcibly, re-appear on every page of religious history. It is they which in the history of Israel lie at the root of every contradiction and every conflict, even to the supreme and final conflict of Calvary, because they lead, the one to the theology of the publican in the parable and the other to that of the Pharisee. Without insisting further, let us grasp, before entering upon a recital of their conflicts, the origin of these two tendencies and note in passing that both their successions of heroes connect perfectly with the first man through his eldest son, called in the one version Cain, and in the other Seth.

*"And now cursed art thou from the ground."* The words of God to Cain have been fulfilled. Nature does not yield her secrets; they are wrested from her by force. In perpetual rebellion against the violence which exhausts her, she gives nothing to her fallen king without exacting the price of blood for each one of his discoveries. The path of progress is strewn along its whole length with the victims of accidents, imprudence, powerlessness and superstition; and the universe, instead of the glory of man, proclaims his martyrdom. Man, on his part, shows himself to his cruel mother earth a true son of Cain. Instead of making the best of the treasures of nature, he destroys them; instead of working for the happiness of society, he exploits it. Not content to suffer what he cannot avoid, he suffers through his own fault, a self-made martyr. No doubt, civilization makes fresh conquests every day, but if we consider the immense waste entailed, the weapons employed in most of its triumphs, the social conditions of the struggle for life, the great causes of disturbance, corruption and ruin, such as the overcrowding of human beings in the great towns which are yet our centres of light, or the devastations inflicted by war with which rests always in the last resort the decision of national destinies, we are forced to admit that at bottom man, through all his metamorphoses, is still a wolf to his

fellow-man. The song of Lamech (*Gen.* iv. 23-24), the most ancient poetical fragment contained in the Bible, is a cry of murder, and expresses fitly the sanguinary manners and customs of primitive ages. Moses' law of Retaliation, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (*Ex.* xxi. 23-25), which seems to us inhuman, marks an immense advance over the previous state of things, when uncurbed vengeance recognized no rule but the whim or strength of the injured party. The law of Retaliation is half-way between arbitrary reprisals and the gospel-law of forgiveness. This does not mean that mankind has ever succeeded in throwing off completely the habits of its original barbarism. Even modern "Christians" have before now uttered their own variations on the song of Lamech. There is no lack of evidence that mankind, even after nineteen centuries of Christianity, is still, by instinct and habit, truly the child of Cain.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FLOOD.

#### GENESIS VI.-IX.

##### THE TWO ACCOUNTS OF THE FLOOD.

[*N.B.*—The following translation is that of the Revised Version, except that “God” and “The Lord” are replaced by the actual names used in the Hebrew original. See Note on the Translation, above.]

##### PROPHETIC TRADITION.

*Gen.* vi. (1) 5-8; vii. 1-5, 7-9, 16<sup>b</sup>, 10, 12, 17<sup>b</sup>, 22, 23; viii. 2<sup>b</sup>, 3<sup>a</sup>, 6-12, 20-22; ix. 18-27.

And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man and beast and creeping thing, and fowl of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this genera-

##### PRIESTLY TRADITION.

*Gen.* vi. 9-22; vii. 6, 11, 13-16<sup>a</sup>, 17<sup>a</sup>, 18-21, 24; viii. 1, 2<sup>a</sup>, 3<sup>b</sup>-5, 13-19; ix. 1-17, 28, 29.

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations; Noah walked with Elohim. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And the earth was corrupt before Elohim, and the earth was filled with violence. And Elohim saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

And Elohim said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within

## TWO TRADITIONS OF THE FLOOD 47

### PROPHETIC TRADITION.

tion. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female ; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female : to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights ; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground.

### PRIESTLY TRADITION.

and without with pitch. And this is how thou shalt make it : the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A light shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward ; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof ; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven ; every thing that is in the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with thee ; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee ; they shall be male and female. Of the fowl after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee ; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him.

Thus did Noah ; according to all that Elohim commanded him, so did he. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of

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### PROPHETIC TRADITION.

And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the ground, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, male and female, as Jehovah commanded Noah.

And Jehovah shut him in.

And it came to pass after the seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. And the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living thing was destroyed, which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping thing, and fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark.

And the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off

### PRIESTLY TRADITION.

heaven were opened. In the self-same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind, and every fowl after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as Elohim commanded him.

And the flood was forty days upon the earth. And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heavens were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both fowl, and cattle, and beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

And Elohim remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark: and Elohim made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped; and after the end of an hundred and fifty days the waters



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### PROPHETIC TRADITION.

the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground ; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him to the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth : and he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days ; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark ; and the dove came in to him at eventide ; and, lo, in her mouth an olive leaf pluckt off : so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days ; and sent forth the dove ; and she returned not again unto him any more.

And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah ; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled the sweet savour ; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ; neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and

### PRIESTLY TRADITION.

decreased. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month : in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth : and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry.

And Elohim spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh, both fowl, and cattle, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him ; every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, whatsoever moveth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark.

And Elohim blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air ; with all

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### PROPHETIC TRADITION.

harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

And the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah; and of these was the whole earth overspread.

And Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done unto him. And he said,

Cursed be Canaan;

A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

And he said,

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem;

And let Canaan be his servant.

God enlarge Japheth,

And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;

And let Canaan be his servant.

### PRIESTLY TRADITION.

wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; as the green herb have I given you all. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood, the blood of your lives, will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it: and at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of Elohim made he man. And you, be ye fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

And Elohim spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the fowl, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And Elohim said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations; I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow

## PROPHETIC TRADITION.

## PRIESTLY TRADITION.

shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud ; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between Elohim and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And Elohim said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

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And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years : and he died.

IN the two narratives of the Flood and the Tower of Babel, the Prophetic Tradition sets forth the two principal factors of history, viz. freewill, which allows sin to drag man to the furthest excesses of corruption, and miracles, that is to say the part played by Divine Providence in the government of the world below ; the power of God serving by turns His Holiness and His love, exterminating the disobedient, showing mercy to Noah, and confounding the arrogance of the builders of Babel.

The account of the Flood is the first in the Old Testament in which the final reviser of the Hebrew history employs a method to which he has recourse only on rare occasions and which consists in interweaving very closely into one single narrative the two traditions which he had before him, and whose preservation, even to the minutest details, seemed to him a sacred duty. As a specimen of the work of this pious Jewish compiler, the two accounts are here transcribed side by side : that of the Prophetic Tradition, and that of the Priestly, restored as far as possible in their original form.

A comparison of these two accounts with the corresponding chapters in the Bible will quickly show that we possess two histories of the Flood in the very pages where a superficial reading had detected only one. But once the two accounts are disentangled, there is no more question of the differences and divergences which complete the proof of their original independence. In the Priestly Tradition, God is throughout called *Elohim*; the Ark is to contain a pair of every kind of animal; the Flood is brought about by overflowing as well as by rainfall; the duration of the Flood is one year; etc., etc. In the Prophetic Tradition, much simpler in its presentation of the deity, God is throughout called *Jehovah*, the Ark is to contain seven pairs of clean and one of unclean animals, rainfall alone produces the Flood, which lasts only about three months, etc., etc. This example shows better than any learned theory the process of compilation employed, with more or less detail, by the collectors of our sacred traditions, and the consequent difficulty which faces the theologians who set out to reconstitute the literary history and the religious annals of the people of Israel.

In the story of the Flood, as in the preceding narratives, the writer is not concerned with historical truth. We cannot entertain for a moment the possibility of a flood swallowing up the whole globe and immediately after it one or several pairs of every kind of animal then known, from polar bear to Australian kangaroos, re-appearing on the earth, thanks to a ship in which they were collected on a definite day, shut up and fed during several months. But it does not follow that the story of the Flood is a purely mythical invention. On the contrary, no prehistoric tradition is better established. With the exception of the black races, all the tribes of the earth testify to its reality. India supplies several accounts of it; Persia offers a variation of it in the Avesta; it is celebrated in the theology of Mithra; the Greeks have their Deucalion; the Egyptians, in a similar story, describe the destruction of mankind under the orders of the god Ra; while it has not been proved that the Chinese traditions of an inundation of the Hoang Ho do not refer to the same event. More or less distinct memories among the popula-

tions of the New World or of Polynesia—especially the Mexican legend of the man shut up in an ark filled with everything necessary to the preservation of human life, and releasing birds to find out whether the waters have retreated, until the humming-bird returns with a leaf in its beak—prove that a tradition of a flood, at times in striking agreement with the Biblical version, has been preserved among the tribes of America and Oceania.

The account in *Genesis* recalls even in their details traditions committed to writing long before its own date, as may be seen from the following fragments of the poem on Gilgamesh, discovered on Chaldaean tablets several centuries earlier than Moses and containing among others a circumstantial account of the Flood: Shamashnapishtim, the Chaldaean Noah, is himself reporting the event to his host Izdubar:—"The city of Shurippak, which thou knowest, on the river Euphrates, honoured not the gods. I, even I alone served them. Therefore Anu called them, and the gods took counsel; and Bel proposed a Flood, and the others approved. Then the god Eâ said unto me: 'Build thee a ship, and finish it quickly: at the time I tell thee of, enter therein and close the door thereof, and lay within thy wheat, thy goods, thy victuals, thy wealth, thy slaves both male and female, thy young men, the cattle of the field, the wild beasts, and so on.' All that I possessed I gathered together, even all that I possessed of the seed of life of every kind. Beasts and sons of the people, I made them all to go up, and I closed the door upon them. Then Musherinanamari rose up from the foundations of the sky in a dark cloud; Ramman thundered in the midst of this cloud; Nabu and Sharru went before, yea, they went laying waste the mountain and the plain; Nergal went dragging chastisements after him; Adar went turning all things upside down; the archangels of the deep turned all things to destruction. All was destroyed among living things upon the earth; the horrible flood rose up even to the heaven, the brother saw his brother no more, and one man no longer knew another. In heaven the gods were afraid, they went up to the heaven of Anu. There they remained and moved not, huddled together like dogs.

Sitting on their seats, the gods shed tears and held their lips tightly closed, and thought upon the things that were to come. Six days passed and as many nights ; as the seventh day drew near, the rain of the flood abated. I looked upon the sea and watched eagerly. All mankind had returned to clay, and the dead bodies floated like the sea-weed. I opened the window ; sorrow gat hold upon me, I sat me down and wept. The ship was carried over the land of Nisir ; the mountain of Nisir made the ship to stop. After seven days I sent forth a dove ; the dove went, turned this way and that and found no place where to alight, and then she returned unto me. I caused a swallow to come forth and let her go ; the swallow went, turned this way and that and found no place where to alight, and then returned unto me. I caused a raven to come forth and let him go : the raven found some carrion upon the waters ; he did eat and came back no more. Then I raised the altar of my burnt offering upon the peak of the mount. The gods smelled the smell thereof, yea, they smelled a goodly smell. The gods gathered together like unto flies over above my sacrifice. Bel saw the ship ; he was filled with wrath. Then Eâ opened his mouth and spake : 'O thou, Bel, herald of the gods, how didst thou not restrain thyself? It was thou who madest the water-spout of the flood ! Let the sinner bear the weight of his sin : instead of another flood, let the lions come up and diminish the number of men upon the earth ; instead of another flood, let the god of plagues come up and let him reap a harvest of men !' Then Bel came into the ship, took me by the hand and caused me to rise . . . etc."

Another tradition had it that before entering the ark, the Chaldaean Noah, this time called Xisuthros, had buried in the city of Sippara, by order of the High God, all the books in which the men of old had set forth the sacred sciences, "to which were committed the beginning, the middle and the end. When he had disappeared, those of his comrades who had remained on board, seeing that he returned not again, went out and began to seek him, calling him by his name. He showed not himself unto them, but a voice from heaven warned them to be devout towards the gods, to

return to Babylon and to dig up the books and hand them down to future generations. It told them also that the country wherein they were was Armenia. . . ."<sup>1</sup> (The reader will not need to be reminded that Ararat, on which, according to the Biblical statement, Noah's ark rested, is a mountain in Armenia.)

The question now arises as to what idea we can form of the event to which so many widely different traditions bear witness. Although the word "*ante-diluvian*" has now no value as a scientific term, geologists have yet proved and described so many cosmic upheavals as taking place during the quaternary epoch, that we are justified in attaching a real historical importance to the traditions which tell of continents swallowed up by the waters, whether in the Mediterranean, as for instance that of which the Archipelago shows the scattered wreckage, or in the Atlantic. Who has not heard of the famous isle of Atlantis, described by Plato and celebrated by modern theosophists, that wonderful land overwhelmed by the waves which once rolled over the Sahara, and supposed to have left its last traces in the present Canary Islands? There are historians and poets who make that island the cradle of mankind and civilization, with Egypt for its earliest colony. The existence of Atlantis in prehistoric times would be an eminently satisfactory solution of the common memories shared by the tribes of America and of the shores of the Mediterranean. It is impossible to decide whether the various traditions of the Flood relate to local disasters, subsidence of the land, tidal waves, etc., or simply contain the general recollection of one grand universal catastrophe. The main interest of the story centres not in this question but in the fact of which it affords a typical proof, namely, that under the influence of the monotheistic idea human traditions immediately acquire breadth and simplicity and rise to a moral height and a religious significance which win them admission into the archives of Truth. Comparison of the Biblical accounts with the Chaldaean tradition quoted above in its main lines, a tradition sprung from the same source

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Maspéro, "La Chaldée primitive" in *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, 1895.

ethnically as the chapters in *Genesis*, shows the gulf that exists between them. In the one case—and the same is true of all analogous traditions—the Flood is an accidental or arbitrary act, a scene of vengeance enacted in the midst of disorder and the purpose of which is difficult to discern. In the other, the Biblical statement presents us with a just God creating man after His own image with a definite plan in view, and mankind morally disqualifying itself for the carrying out of that plan by its ingratitude and degeneracy. With these premises, all difficulties vanish: the Creator's intentions are holy; His object is an attempt to realize around the person of Noah the obedient family which the degenerate heirs of the first man were powerless to build up. In a word, the Flood was not the vengeance of God but the re-creation of mankind.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

The question of the locality of the submerged Atlantis has recently been revived by arguments based upon the recent excavations of Dr. Arthur Evans on the site of Knossos in Crete. We are reminded that the Minoan realm was once a vast and ancient power, with a marvellous reputation in the Eastern Mediterranean, to which it stood for the furthest limits of the Far West, and that suddenly there fell upon it a terrible, swift and complete destruction. The effect upon that Eastern world was as if the whole island had suddenly sunk beneath the waves. It is claimed that Atlantis was no other than Crete, and the arguments may be briefly indicated as follows:

(1) In the *Timæus* and the *Critias* Plato says that Atlantis was the way to other islands, whence you could reach the opposite continent. Also that in it there was a great empire holding rule over several other islands as well as parts of the continent.

These two statements accurately describe the power of Knossos both geographically and politically.

(2) Atlantis was lofty and steep along the sea (as the coast of Crete is), while the country around the city was a level plain sheltered from the North. This agrees exactly with the site of Knossos.

(3) The boundaries of the two empires were identical: they both extended over North Africa as far as Egypt and over Europe as far as Tyrrhenia. (There were four Labyrinths in the world, and one of them was the tomb of Lars Porsena of Clusium.) Also there are traces of "Mycenaean" collisions with the Egyptians.



(4) Plato says that the Athenians alone set a boundary to the aggressions of Atlantis. Legends indicate that Knossos was overthrown by the pre-Dorian inhabitants of Greece proper, who were represented in Solon's time by the Athenians.

(5) The difficulty contained in the fact that Atlantis was said to have been situated beyond the Pillars of Hercules, whereas Crete is inside them, may be explained as follows. The Egyptian story said the island was in the Far West, as indeed Crete was to the coast-hugging Egyptian mariners. But the Greek equivalent for "Far West" in later times was "beyond the Pillars of Hercules." Hence arose the apparent discrepancy.

(6) A strong argument is the tradition of the shallowness and mud-banks marking the place where Atlantis once lay. Surely the first mariners to sail west of Gibraltar would not bring home tales of the shallowness of the Atlantic. They would more probably be impressed by its depth and vastness. But if Atlantis was Crete, the explanation is easy. Not far away are those quicksands off the Tunisian coast, the dreaded Syrtes.

(7) There are striking similarities of detail between Minoan Crete and Plato's Atlantis. "The great harbour, for example, with its shipping and its merchants coming from all parts, the elaborate bath-rooms, the stadium, and the solemn sacrifice of a bull are all thoroughly, though not exclusively, Minoan; but when we read how the bull is hunted in the temple of Poseidon without weapons but with staves and nooses, we have an unmistakable description of the bull-ring at Knossos, the very thing which struck foreigners most and which gave rise to the legend of the Minotaur." The Minoan bull-fight differed from all others which the world has seen in exactly the point which Plato emphasizes—namely that no weapons were used.

(8) Proclus asserts that he saw pictures of the men of Atlantis in Egypt, and that there were many such in the country. If he means Minoans his words are intelligible, for they are represented in some of the most striking reliefs that still remain in Egypt.

—Abridged from *The Times*, Feb. 19, 1909.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE TOWER OF BABEL.

GENESIS XL. 1-9.

BETWEEN the accounts of the Flood and of the Tower of Babel, the historian has inserted a catalogue of nations, preserved by the Priestly Tradition, which, besides being the most ancient ethnological enumeration in existence, possesses, in the midst of insurmountable difficulties, a genuine scientific interest. One feature of it in particular ought to be sufficient to rid for ever all Bible histories of the barbarous prejudice which makes coloured slavery a fulfilling of the curse of Ham, the youngest son of Noah. The tenth chapter of *Genesis*, in fact, tells us that the lot of Ham included, above all, Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, and Babylonia, and historical proofs abound that the Hamitic nations, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Sumerians, and Accadians, so far from participating in the slow development of the black African races, have been in fact the pioneers of world-wide civilization. The catalogue, besides, grants no precedence and pronounces no sentence of outlawry. The three lines of the sons of Noah are represented without distinction of race, migrating and increasing by a gradual and natural development.

Possibly the Prophetic Tradition had also its own scheme of nations. It is at any rate certain that the episode of the Tower of Babel sets in quite a different light the origin of the multiplicity of languages and dispersion of nations over the earth. According to this version, a definite tragic event settled the fate of the human community. The age of the

Flood was not far distant ; mankind, sprung from Noah, lived still as one family in the same camp, and was prosperous, conscious of its strength and forgetful of God. Its sin was not, as has been said, the wish to scale the heaven by building a tower as a challenge to God ; its folly and the initial fault of its social ideal was, on the contrary, that it treated the religious element as a negligible quantity and conceived, for the attainment of power and future progress, a plan in which God had no place. God's creature, in spite of catastrophes which should have been a lesson to it, still persisted in its original pride and natural unbelief, and put its trust in bricks and mortar rather than consecrate its genius and assure its social destiny by obedience to the God Who created it. God therefore refused His blessing to the undertaking, and, by an intervention of Providence, blocked the way by which, straying further and further from Him, mankind could be led only to disaster. Hence the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of the human family. When communion with the Father ceases, misunderstanding between the brothers is sure to follow. There can be no home without a head, and no unity among men without God.

In form, nothing could be simpler than the picture of this colossal Tower, the arrogant ambition of the builders and the interference of God, Who, in language which recalls that of *Genesis* iii. 22, seems, here as there, solely concerned with taking precautions against an estranged humanity. But in the substance, what power of intuition and prophetic vision ! The truth here expressed is for all time. The history of nations proves the saying that no progress is sure, or evolution permanent, which neglects the moral element or lightens it of its indispensable factor of obedience to God. The history of religions has nothing to offer which recalls this short and suggestive story. No doubt, the description of the monument and the materials employed in its construction, no less than the name of Babel itself, carry us to the banks of the Euphrates. Babel is Hebrew for Babylon, and the early Rabbis of Mesopotamia considered that the gigantic ruins of *Birs Nimrud*, discovered on the site of the ancient

Chaldaeian capital, were no other than the ruins of Babel. We cannot lay much stress on an assertion of this kind. All that we are entitled to infer is that the historian who first committed to writing the tradition of the Tower or clothed a religious conception of the first rank in this form, may very well have been thinking of Babylon, whose history, built up of gorgeous magnificence and resounding catastrophes, stretches back till it vanishes in the mists of the past.<sup>1</sup> *Genesis* fixes 2564 B.C. as the date of the building of the Tower of Babel, and asserts that until then "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." Now inscriptions have been found in three languages, of different families, Egyptian, Sumerian, and Babylonian, all of which are older than the Biblical dates of creation. This proves once more that we cannot trust the figures of the priestly historian, nor can we be too circumspect if we attempt to find in the primitive accounts of *Genesis* anything more than the religious postulates of the Revelation of Jehovah.

<sup>1</sup> The most recent excavations have revealed on the site of Babylon twenty-one strata of ruins one upon the other. A well, 128 feet deep, shows the presence of alluvial deposits belonging to as many different periods; and at the bottom of this well perfectly preserved architectural remains allow us to infer the existence of a town going back to 6000 B.C. Not far from there has been recovered the famous library, so frequently alluded to in the inscriptions of Assurbanipal, which has yielded more than 53,000 cylinders, prisms or tablets of clay, covered with cuneiform inscriptions, now being deciphered by a large number of experts. Without waiting for the results of this formidable investigation, we may conclude from the data supplied in the still unpublished papers of the eminent assyriologist Hilprecht, that the earliest Babylonian civilization dates from 7000 B.C.

[*Translator's Note.* Dr. T. Pinches in a paper on recent discoveries in Babylonia said that unfortunately the remains of the Tower of Babel—that structure so renowned of old—had within recent years been cleared away to build the dam of the Hindiyeh Canal, and instead of a great monument the depression where its foundations were laid was now all that existed. The basement of the Tower was square, and not, as the pictures in old family Bibles and elsewhere showed, circular in form and tapering with a spiral ascent until the top was reached. According to Dr. Weissbach, the structure measured about 309 ft. each way and the height was about the same. Though this was only a third of the height of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, it was still sufficiently imposing as a high monument. The lowest stage was much higher than any of the others, and the topmost stage was the upper temple or sanctuary of the god Bel or Merodach, a hall of considerable size, 80 ft. long, 70 ft. broad, and 50 ft. high.—*Times*, Feb. 16, 1909.]

## CONCLUSION.

Thus the prehistoric narratives, which, just because they are *pre*-historic, are beyond the reach of historic science, have yet laid before us the great fundamental truths of religion.

- (1) All things were created by one only God, Who planned the world for the happiness of His creature whom He made after His own image, and therefore free.
- (2) Man, like a prodigal son, has separated himself from his heavenly Father and has subjected creation to Satan, henceforth the Prince of this World.
- (3) Humanity, deprived of spiritual communion with the living God, has established itself in a state of sin.
- (4) Penalties are not sufficient to bring men back to the path of duty.
- (5) What men undertake without the help of God is only vanity.

Given these principles, which at the outset define clearly the positions and responsibilities of the parties, what will God do to snatch man from Satan and to bring back the prodigal son to the paternal hearth, fulfilling the primeval prophecy, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent"?

## PART THE SECOND.

### THE PATRIARCHS.

#### INTRODUCTION.

#### THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION CONSIDERED HISTORICALLY.

##### *Section 1. The School of Nature.*

THERE is no scientific reason to deny that primitive tribes may have preserved some idea of the only God and Creator of the whole universe. But it is not obvious that this idea, if it existed, exerted any influence on the religious education of humanity. The development of natural religion seems to have begun everywhere with *Animism*, that is to say, the belief in the reign of spirits. Hence the hasty conclusion that the origin of religion should be sought, not, as the Bible has it, in an initial connexion between man and his Creator, but in the savage's terror of natural cataclysms and in our own bewilderment in presence of the riddle of the universe and of death. According to this view, man's first religion was the Animism of fetish-worship which deified nature; then he distinguished between the god himself and the material object which served as his abode, and thus Polytheism came by a natural evolution out of Animism: later, by the efforts of thinkers and prophets, Polytheism finally grew into the theological idea of a single God Who created the heaven and the earth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Aug. Sabatier, *Esquisse d'une philosophie de la Religion*, 1897, pp. 22, 121, etc.

At first sight, this theory attracts us by its apparent simplicity. But on second thoughts, we wonder how fear can give birth to religion, if this does not already pre-exist in man, at least in the form of an unconscious recollection for ever on the verge of consciousness. Besides, we fail to find in history the successive steps of religious evolution. On the contrary, we find that the process everywhere has been one of reaction, and that the law of religious progress among men is not expressed by the term *evolution* but by the term *revolution*, which is very different organically and lends a totally different colour to the moral freedom of man. This is proved at the start by the first religious phase falling within the scope of our inquiry. No doubt, mankind everywhere steps upon the stage of history with purely animistic beliefs. Only, when Polytheism supervenes and the god supplants the demon, this is not due to a natural evolution, but, on the contrary, to a reaction of the human mind against the terror inspired by the invisible powers of the spiritual world. Thus the Roman poet is right: "Fear begat the gods." But it is not physical fear, which shudders at natural cataclysms and could never produce religion, but rather religious fear, which behind those cataclysms discerns spiritual, demoniacal powers, and which seeks a protection against the spirits which haunt it. If we probe the myths which produced the principal religions of the East, and seek the origin, in Egypt, of the fortune of Osiris and his ancestors, conquerors of Apap; in India, of the worship of Indra, prince of the Devas and conqueror of the Asuras; in Persia, of the renown of Ahura Mazda and his prophet, conqueror of the Drûg; in Chaldaea, of the worship of Bel Marduk; we shall find that, with the exception of Mazda, whose origin is little known, all these gods, the centres of ancient Polytheism, are the heirs of their own works, attaining heaven by right of conquest, owing the homage paid to them to their victories over the world of spirits.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Typical prayer, an invocation to Gibil (Chaldaea): "O thou, who turnest thy breast against the enemy that assaileth by night! Make man, the son of his god, to shine like the heaven and the earth, and evil words (the evil spirit) to depart far from him! . . ."

Whether they belonged at first to the class of seers, of whom the medicine-man of savage tribes is a far-off distorted image, or were heads of families or tribes, that is to say protectors against enemies here below, before they became so against the powers of darkness in the mysterious region to which death called them, they one and all were human, and the famous line of Voltaire can be literally applied to them :

Le premier qui fut roi fut un soldat heureux.

Sprung from a reaction against the demoniacal powers which devastated the earth and terrorized its inhabitants, the god stands to the spirit as the victor to the vanquished : the god is, first and foremost, the *Slayer of the Serpent*.

Unquestionably, history shows that this phrase asserts too much, and that in fact the world of spirits, never thoroughly reconnoitred, supplied the victorious gods unceasingly with unconquered adversaries who, for philosophical minds, still kept their hold of the secret of the universe. But the imagination of a nation does not grasp the problem so closely. It had need of its gods to calm its fears and to satisfy its craving for a personal god to whom it could speak, and it peopled the heaven with tutelary deities. It is the same imagination which creates them, sets them on their pedestals and surrounds them with a glamour borrowed from Paradise ; and then, after revelling in the dreams they inspired, after using them as a foundation for their highest aspirations, after seeking God in its gods and loving them with an ardent love, it still remains faithful to them when cold reason has laid them low, and adores them in secret in the degenerate days when two augurs cannot look at each other without a smile.

The inference is that Polytheism grew out of Animism not by evolution but by revolution, and that in the heart of mankind, left to its own resources, the idea of God grew out of the experience of the demon. And thus, the relation between Animism and Polytheism, which was thought to upset the Biblical revelation, is found on the contrary to



help us to understand it. If really, according to the story of the Fall, mankind driven from the divine abode developed in a state of severance from God and of close dependence on the spiritual being who seduced it in the guise of the serpent, it was inevitable that the earliest religion of the child, or rather the orphan, man, should be a religion of fear, a meeting with the Prince of this world and an experience of the demon. To find and possess God, mankind had henceforth to look for Him and to rise gradually up to Him by a painful education, which was the price it had to pay for its liberty. Now the claim of the Bible has been made good by history. The school of nature, teeming with evil spirits, has brought a trembling and sinful humanity to its first critical change, to the *wish for a god*. The day when his reaction against the powers of darkness which had enslaved nature made him call out for a protector, man started on the path which was to lead him to salvation. That was where his Creator was waiting for him: and the issue of this first period of the religious history of mankind was the call of Abraham.

### *Section 2. Necessity of a Revelation.*

To grasp properly the meaning of the call of Abraham the Chaldee, we must understand clearly the data of our problem. The Fall having separated the creature from the Creator, its logical and historical consequences are:—atrophy of the religious sense; isolation of the moral principle; loss of the Spirit of God. In other words, the soul of man, by this threefold consequence, is robbed of the elements which make up its normal life, the spiritual life, the truly *living* life.

Consider the natural world, which the Creator, for our instruction, has spread out before our eyes as a grand parable of the spiritual world. Physical life is a mystery. Yet our own observation can discern the elements whose combination produces life. Incubation can have no effect on an egg if unfertilized; on the other hand, if it be fertilized and be denied incubation, no life will proceed from it either. Thus the lesson of the organic world is that to produce life, on the one hand two elements must unite to form a germ, and on

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the other, something must give it warmth and impart the creative energy. The same with the soul. Morality without religion is idle vexation ; religion without morality is barren adoration ; and every-day experience teaches that the union of religion and morality cannot produce a living, that is a regenerate, soul, so long as the Spirit of God has not endowed the germ with life. Considered from this point of view as a forward march from death to life, as a *regeneration*, the history of Revelation falls into three periods as follows :

- (1) Restoration of the religious principle which had been stunted by the Fall. Education of faith in the Patriarchs through the worship of *Elohim*. Covenant of God-*Elohim* with Abraham.
- (2) Return to the union of the religious and moral principles separated by the Fall. The Law of Sinai and the preaching of the Prophets. Covenant of God-*Jehovah* with Israel through Moses.
- (3) Outpouring of the Spirit of God on mankind redeemed by Jesus Christ. Final covenant of God in His *Son* with all those who accept Him as their Saviour.

### *Section 3. The Worship of Elohim.*

The Fall having deprived man of communion with his Creator, the first result of this deprivation was to destroy in him the harmony which would have permitted him to fulfil his destiny of likeness to that Creator. At the very fountain-head of his being, it made a breach between the religious and the moral principle. Man has lost his God, but he has retained his conscience, and he is still in his very essence a being having in him the knowledge of good and evil, a free being. In the words of St. Paul, "Men are a law unto themselves, in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them" (*Romans* ii. 14, 15). Man, as a member of this second humanity fashioned apart from the plan of the divine creation, is still a moral being. I do not say he will attain to good ; on the contrary, I maintain that he will not, since

good exists only in God and man has taken up his own position outside God. But still, he is a being who understands that there is good and evil and who, while following the law of his carnal nature which leads him astray, is still capable of sympathizing with the good, of catching confused glimpses of it and of striving towards it with all his strength (*Romans* vii. 14-25). Three thousand years before Moses, the Egyptians wrote in their *Book of the Dead*: "I have used no deceit against any man, I have not lied at the judgement-seat, I have not done an ill service to a slave in the eyes of his master, I have not sinned out of regard for my betters, I have not used violence, I have not starved, I have not caused any to weep, I have not committed forgery, I have not made false weights or measures, I have been neither a glutton nor a drunkard, I am pure, I am pure, I am pure! . . ."

The human conscience, it is clear, did not need to be taught at Sinai that it is wrong to kill, to deceive and to dishonour one's neighbour. Antiquity shows us fallen humanity framing its own code of morals, a neutral code, apart from the revealed religion. "The Gentiles," says St. Paul, "do by nature the things of the law" (*Romans* ii. 14). But precisely because this code is framed without the aid of the religious principle, *without God*, in whom are both the ideal and the strength to attain to it, its ethics are hesitating, based on mere instinct, lacking driving power, unregulated and liable to all the errors and whims of the human intellect and temper. It is like a ship without pilot or compass. What it needs is self-knowledge, and this it cannot get without knowledge of God. The Creator could either leave mankind to itself, or else reveal Himself to it and restore in it the religious principle by granting it, as a free gift, a fresh beginning of positive religion. He chose the second alternative, and the call of Abraham marks, if I may say so, the renewal of personal intercourse between Creator and created. It is the return of religion, that is, of a *bond between man and God*.

This renewal, though entirely free, is not arbitrary. The whole development of primitive Animism shows that the

Creator respected the freedom of His creature, giving it free play to learn of the spiritual powers which it had chosen for its masters, and waited patiently for the day when the hard lessons of life without God would force upon the human conscience the need of God. The course of human history before Abraham made Abraham possible. God called mankind when mankind called upon God. For the humble beginnings of this restored religion, we must go to those lands of the East, held, from their mingling of primitive races, to be the cradle of nations. God called a son of Chaldaea, to make of him the "Father of the Faithful," because Chaldaea in the third millennium B.C. possessed the purest, most exalted and probably most ancient animistic worship in the world in the religion of the Sumerians and Accadians; and the fusion<sup>1</sup> of the sidereal worship of the Semite-Chaldacans with Accadian Animism had just enriched these religions with the notion of the protecting deity, the ancient and mysterious *Elohim*<sup>2</sup> of the Hebrews. The origin and etymology of the term *Elohim* are obscure, but its meaning is made clear by its use and the cognate names for the deity among the neighbours of the Israelites. The Hebrew *Elohim*, the Phoenician and Canaanitish *El*, the Assyrian *Ilu* and the Arabian *Ilâh*, mean both "*he who is strong*" and "*he who walks before*," and the Semitic nations give the title to the heavenly patron, the tutelary deity, who takes an interest in such and such a country, city or tribe, and says to weak, timid, superstitious man, lost among the spiritual powers which surround him: "Go, for I will be with thee! Be faithful unto me, and I will protect thee!"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Semitic conquerors had invaded Sumerian and Accadian territory, and established their supremacy over the plains of the Tigris and the Euphrates where a most advanced civilization had flourished for several thousands of years.

<sup>2</sup> I do not use this name in the sense in which it has become a recognized term of literary criticism, or again a frequent synonym for Jehovah. I attach to it the original meaning it possesses in the earliest Biblical narratives and in religion previous to the revelation of Sinai.

<sup>3</sup> The notion of protecting authority is so decidedly the central idea of the name *Elohim* that in Hebrew literature the word is applied at times to human beings when they are considered as protectors or as persons clothed with special authority. Thus Moses is Israel's *Elohim* against Pharaoh; the King is an *Elohim* for his

The age of *Elohim* proper, in the history of religion, is only a time of transition between Animism and Polytheism. For the protecting god shares the destiny of the tribe which worships him: he is too human not to share the fate of the men whose religious ideas he embodies. The terrible wars which unify the country and subject the towns to one another, inevitably establish a hierarchy of the several Elohim: those of the conquerors become the great ones, the lords; while those of the vanquished or the allies become servants, or else enter the divine council in heavenly “Triads,” or “Ogdoads” or “Enneads.” There are endless combinations, around which grow up magnificent rituals, central sanctuaries, clergies, and priestly castes, and the result is Polytheism, that is to say the first corruption of the religious sense, or Idolatry. Was this idea of an Elohim, of a protecting god of the family or the district, peculiar to the Semites, or is it found, before the age of Polytheism, among Hamites and Aryans? The view that it was not a peculiarity of one race, but rather a more or less distinct phase in the religious history of all nations, is supported by the fact that among the Hamitic Egyptians, for instance, before the supremacy of the Thinite dynasties<sup>1</sup> and the organization of Polytheism by Menes, each district and each city had its own Elohim, *nutir nutti*, e.g. Osiris, worshipped at Mendes, Ammon, god of Thebes, or Râ, lord of Heliopolis. Similarly, among the Aryans—it would be interesting to examine from this point of view the worship of the *Pitris* of India, and of the *Fravashis* of Persia, a kind of ancestral deities analogous to those of savage tribes—the Vedic literature reveals a well-defined *Elohist* religion, where each family has its own protecting god and patron, whom it exalts as the god above all others. Whatever may be the case with other countries, one thing seems quite certain, that, between the ages of Animism and Polytheism, there

subjects; the house of David is an *Elohim* for the chosen people; Samuel, called up from the dead, appears as an *Elohim*, etc.; cf. *Exod.* iv. 16, vii. 4, *Psa.* xlv. 7, *1 Sam.* xxviii. 13, *Zach.* xii. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Towards the fifth millennium, Menes, of Thinis in Upper Egypt, founded the first Egyptian dynasty.

occurred in the history of Chaldaea, in the age when Bel reigned in Nipur, Anu in Erech, Nuah in Eridu, Sin in Ur, Samas in Larsa, Nebo at Borsippa and Marduk at Babylon, a time when two races and two religious temperaments had been fused. Together they produced the worship of the protector-god, of the king-god, of the god made in the likeness of man, to whom man can speak, confide his fears and attribute his victories, after putting in him his trust and his hope by means of a covenant binding together, at a definite place and time, the interests of heaven and earth. This god of the primitive henotheism,<sup>1</sup> anthropomorphic and anti-demoniacal, protector of a single city, tribe or family, is the Elohim of the new-born religion in which man, isolated and selfish, first expressed the motto of his simple worship: "*God on my side!*" This passing phase, soon swallowed up in Polytheism, yet continued long enough for God, Who was waiting for it to reveal Himself to the world, to choose Chaldaea and the town of Ur, in which to call Abraham; in other words, to set a man apart, remove him far from his family and the influences which were soon to disfigure the worship of his race, and to promise him, as the reward of his obedience, all the temporal and spiritual blessings which He sums up Himself in the words "*I will be thy Elohim.*"

Let us pause to consider the marvellous combination of divine initiative and human freedom in this call, which set apart a family, in which starts, at first with imperceptible steps, the journey of humanity on the path of free salvation. From the first moment of their intercourse, God does nothing without man and man can do nothing without God. If God had not called Abraham, the Elohistic cult of the children of Terah would have shared the common fate and would have been swallowed up in the Polytheism of universal idolatry. It is therefore really by a miraculous intervention of the Creator that religion was restored to

<sup>1</sup>The word *henotheism* is used to express the religious state of a man who worships one single god, without however holding that his god is the only god. This latter belief is expressed in the term *monotheism*. In one sense, the god of the *henotheist* corresponds with the *patron saint* of Roman Catholicism.

man. And the selection of Abraham was purely an act of grace. On the other hand, if the free experience of humanity, under the guidance of Providence, had not led man to recover by his own efforts the idea of God, to wish for God, and to build the altar of Elohim, the Creator could not without infringing human liberty, destroying His own work and contradicting Himself, have called Abraham and said to him: "Here am I, I will be thy Elohim." "I will be *thy* Elohim," said God, as He offered Himself as a guide across the unknown lands where He invited Abraham to journey. And we have just seen what the full meaning of this supernatural promise was to the obedient Chaldaean. Centuries of religious growth, the science of the seers, and the education of his environment had taught him that each district, each town and each tribe had its own Elohim in heaven, a god in the shape of a man, a patron to enrich with gifts, to feed and to flatter, and who in return employed all his care and power to make his worshippers prosperous. That was what he had seen in his native Ur and in all the towns in his country. And so the theophany of Haran—of the manner of which we know absolutely nothing—must have moved him deeply and seemed the presage of un hoped-for prosperity, but did not put him beside himself or shock his reason or his conscience, as would have been done by a portent quite unconnected with his religious ideas, and without any historical precedent. He knew that his wandering family would, like his Chaldaean home in the old days, have a protector. He believed and obeyed. The day when Abraham, at the head of his camels and slaves, came out of Haran to journey to the oaks of Mamre, mankind made its first step in the path by which God wished to bring it back to Himself.

#### *Section 4. Historical Reality of the Patriarchs.*

The last centuries of the third millennium B.C., to which period Abraham belongs, witnessed the earliest fusions of nations in the cradle of primitive civilization. As late as 2300 B.C. the land of the Euphrates and the surrounding territory was divided into rival states, fortified cities, each

with its own god, dotted over a more or less fertile region forming the domains of minor kings. Clan wars were incessant, and each state lay at the mercy of any chance coalition. At this period, a more powerful nation, settled on the east of the Tigris, in the land of Elam, made frequent incursions into Chaldaea and devastated the country under the able generalship of its kings of the *Kudur* (Hebrew : *Chedor*) dynasty and the protection of its patron-gods, among whom was *Lagamar* (Hebrew : *Laomer*). Three years before the great conqueror Hammurabi, of the Babylonian dynasty, had delivered the banks of the Euphrates from these invaders and by a series of brilliant victories had founded the Chaldaean empire, the Elamites had ravaged the Southern provinces, taken Ur, and put to the sword all those of its inhabitants who could not make good their flight. The political history of this period, which we know well from recent discoveries, agrees admirably with the warlike accounts of *Genesis* xiv. Assyriologists generally identify Amraphel, king of Shinar, with Hammurabi, king of Babylon. As for the name of Chedorlaomer (*Kudur-lagamar*) which Maspéro,<sup>1</sup> and many others also, believed to have found in a discovery since then discredited, it answers so exactly by its etymology to the dynasty of the kings of Elam, that it is certainly historical. These and other similar indications permit us to assign Abraham to the old Babylonian age and to regard him as contemporary with the wars waged between the Elamite Kudurs and the Chaldaean kings, in the years when Hammurabi, the Babylonian Charlemagne, was preparing his final conquest.

As history gradually grows more definite, so the workings of Providence become gradually clearer. On the eve of Hammurabi's exploits, the times were favourable to an intervention of the Most High. In fact, a few years later the Babylonian power had swallowed up all the little states and founded its great empire with its settled hierarchy of gods. But at this hour of trial, when the Elamite armies were

<sup>1</sup> Maspéro, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, 3 vol., 1895-1899. Failing this, consult the same author's manual, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient*, 1886.



trampling on the protecting Elohim of the Chaldaean cities and threatening to destroy everything, we can picture to ourselves Terah, gathering around him the members of his family and, to escape massacre, taking, like many others, the road to exile. The caravan flees northward, turns at first in the direction of Canaan, and then halts in a lonely corner of Mesopotamia, at Haran, where the aged sheik Terah dies. At this point God intervenes. Abraham, now the chief of the caravan, left to his own resources in an inhospitable country, deprived of the help of the ancestral Elohim whose territory he had fled from, had arrived at one of those crises of life where an unforeseen incident may decide a whole career. He was ready to hear and answer the irresistible call of the unknown God: "Go, I, even I, will be thy Elohim. Break with the past of thy race, follow me, and I will give thee a country and a posterity, and blessings so great that all the nations of the earth will desire to be blessed in thee."

The foregoing considerations seem sufficiently to establish the historical reality of the Patriarchs, but this is nowadays so violently assailed, that it is necessary, before embarking on their history, to say a word as to the scientific value of the arguments arrayed against them. Not so long ago, the great argument continually urged against the existence of the Patriarchs was this: the time when Abraham is supposed to have lived is one when Chaldea had neither history nor literature; the age of Abraham is the age of myths. Nowadays, science is better informed and has discovered even in its details the history of Chaldea in the third millennium B.C.: it has dug up the correspondence and the legislation of the period and made public the well-preserved and life-like portrait of Hammurabi, the famous Amraphel so severely handled by Abraham. So much then for the objections on the score of "myths"! We are now told instead that, in spite of the framework thus reconstructed, the picture of the Patriarchs is imaginary, and that for two reasons:

(1) The oldest document dealing with the Patriarchs in *Genesis* is twelve or thirteen centuries later than the age of Abraham and his family.

(2) The whole idea of the patriarchal life, and the circumstances and names mentioned, compel us to consider that we are dealing not with biographies of real persons, but with the late personification of communities or tribes, whose early deeds and destinies were embodied and emphasized in the poetical legend of the family of Abraham.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the first point, the reply is that no genuinely scientific view regards the historical composition of the ninth century B.C. as an original creation. It is a compilation of various traditions, now clearly distinguishable, whose common sources may easily take us back to the age of Moses or even beyond, since, writing being in common use in the time of Abraham, there is no reason why during the exile in Egypt the episodes recalling the heroic age of the Patriarchs should not have been fixed in their leading features. But we need not even suppose as much as this. Consider the immobility of the Semitic mind and the habits of the kindred Arabs. Remember, for instance, that at the present day in the streets of Nazareth children still play the games which suggested parables<sup>2</sup> to Jesus two thousand years ago. Is there anything astonishing in the possibility of the Hebrews preserving the memory of the life of their ancestors for a few generations, and is there any justification for a rejection by science of the traditions relating to the infancy of the race? The second objection is more serious and certainly contains an element of truth. The ethnical character of the story of Abraham and his family is on certain points undeniable. One feels clearly that the only care of the author is, at times, to explain and justify the history of a people by its origin. But this is not all. Here is one of the most suggestive pages on this question<sup>3</sup> (from *Modern*

<sup>1</sup> We shall refer to this as the *ethnical* element in the story of the Patriarchs.

<sup>2</sup> Especially that of *Matt.* xi. 16, comparing the Jews to children sitting in the market-places. Cf. *Les Enfants de Nazareth*, by Le Camus (Bishop of La Rochelle), 1900.

<sup>3</sup> Professor G. A. Smith's books are invaluable, especially his *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*.

Professor Smith (*op. cit.* p. 100), following Driver (*Authority and Archaeology*, p. 44) and other critics less disposed than ourselves to admit the historical reality of the migrations of the family of Abraham, allows that history and archaeology

*Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, by G. A. Smith, pp. 102, 103): "The characters of Ishmael, of Jacob and of Esau were the characters of the historical tribes Ishmael, Israel and Edom. Jacob is the essential Israel; in economy, shepherds settling down to agriculture; in religion, worshippers of Jahweh by descent and covenant, meeting Him at certain famous shrines, but carrying about with them domestic gods, as we see even in the family of David; in temperament and genius, astute, persistent, unbroken by disappointment or hope deferred, capable of excelling their neighbours in the Semitic craft and fraud, but capable too of vision and of struggling with the unseen. Esau, on the other hand, is the essential Edomite, as we see him in Scripture, as we realise him on his proudly isolated territory, as we touch him to the last in Antipater and the Herods—a hunter, *a man of the field* or wild uncultivated lands, a man with gods but no religiousness; profane, impulsive, careless, easily wearied. Similarly, Ishmael with *his hand against every man*, Moab with his drunken and incestuous origin, and Reuben with his unchastity, are reflections of the qualities which the tribes called by the

"make possible the wanderings of such a half-settled family as Abraham's upon the desert borders of Southern Palestine and Egypt. The four Mesopotamian kings, of whose invasion of Canaan and pursuit by Abraham we are told in *Genesis* xiv., 'were really contemporaries; and at least three of them ruled over the countries which they are said in *Genesis* xiv. to have ruled'; and their invasion of Palestine was 'in the abstract within the military possibilities of the age' (Driver, *Authority and Archaeology*, p. 44). The existence of the names Jacob and Joseph has been discovered in Palestine at an earlier age than the Exodus; the name 'Israel,' as of a people, in touch with Egypt, has been deciphered upon a stèle of the Pharaoh under whom the Exodus probably took place. . . ."

Archæology, so far from contradicting, establishes the historical possibility of Abraham and his caravans. Cf. again Smith, *op. cit.* p. 101. "Where formerly the figures of the 'Father of the Faithful' and his caravans moved solemnly in high outline through an almost empty world, we see (by the aid of the monuments) embassies, armies, and long lines of traders crossing, by paths still used, the narrow bridge which Palestine forms between the two great centres of early civilization; the constant drift of desert tribes upon the fertile land, and within the latter the frequent villages and their busy fields, the mountain-keeps with their Egyptian garrisons, and the cities on their mounds walled with broad bulwarks of brick and stone."

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same names appear to have developed in history." . . . All excellently expressed and showing keen observation. But is there not a little imagination in so sharply defining the outlines of an object seen from so great a distance; and is it strictly scientific, while accepting the ethnical indications of the Bible as true and generalizing them, to reject the Biblical data as inventions, directly they aim at portraying to us a living historical person? Can we hold that the writer gives us history in his occasional mention of Amraphel or Chedorlaomer, but fiction in his descriptions of the heroes of his own race? If the lives of these heroes were presented to us like those of the characters of mythology, loaded with exploits and prodigies, we might pause. But, on the contrary, the stories are as sane, natural, and human as could be. The portraits of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph are perfect and seem to be taken from life. Besides, a close examination of the tempers and actions of the Patriarchs shows that for the most part it is impossible to explain them by the characteristics of the race or strip them of their sharply-marked individual features. What can be the tribal explanation of Abraham's intercession for Sodom, of the sacrifice of Isaac, of the vision of Bethel, of the wrestling at the ford of Jabbok, of the wonderful scene of Joseph's recognition of his brethren, etc.? Numbers of proper names resist this method of explanation, to begin with that which overshadows all the rest, Abraham, for which criticism has failed to find an ethnical meaning.

There remains in favour of the historical reality of the Patriarchs a final argument, supplied by the history of religions, which seems to us to be conclusive. If there is one truth more clearly revealed than another by the comparative history of religion, it is this, that no religious movement of any importance has taken place in the world which did not have at its root an individual experience and a personal originator. The facts are there to show that, at all the turning points of the religious history of men, there is one particular man, one particular reformer, who effects the reaction, embodies it and hands it on to his spiritual successors. Such were, in the natural religions, Buddha,

Mahomet, Confucius, Zoroaster, etc., and such, in the religion of the Bible, were Luther, Calvin, Augustine, St. Paul, Elijah, Samuel, Moses. . . . If the history of the centuries leading up to the religious revolution of Sinai had been presented to us void of any personality, analogy itself would compel us, in view of the work done, to conclude that there must have been *some one*, some Prophet before the age of Prophecy, who, to smooth the path for Moses, had raised the Hebrew mind above contemporary superstitions and fixed immovably in men's hearts faith in a just and all-powerful Elohim. Now this man and his successors are here before us. *Genesis* gives them to us perfectly human, stripped of all mythical paraphernalia, and in a framework of history of which Assyriology daily proves the astonishing accuracy. We may therefore accept them quite simply, without dwelling too much on the details which the lengthening ages remove out of the reach of verification. All that science has a right to ask of us—and we grant it readily—is that, in our reconstruction of the patriarchal history, we shall leave in the background the stories where the ethnical tendency is too obvious, as, for instance, certain episodes of the lives of Lot, Hagar and Ishmael, Esau, Reuben and Judah, Simeon and Levi. Such a concession we can make the more readily since it compels us to concentrate our attention on the great events in which Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are seen learning faith from their divine Teacher, and fulfilling the rôle assigned to them by Providence, which was to make of them the fathers of all the faithful.

#### *Section 5. God in History.*

On the threshold of the Old Testament, the Christian historian is bound to consider the question of the incessant interventions of God in the course of events and the lives of the Biblical heroes. I say the Christian historian, because for the others the possibility of the supernatural is *ipso facto* brushed aside, and that is why, in spite of their scientific qualifications, the Bible remains a sealed book to them. Not so with the man who, for reasons which science can neither give nor take away, believes in the supernatural in the

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Christian sense,<sup>1</sup> and believes that the carrying out of the designs of an all-wise God presupposes the freedom of the Creator in the education of His free creature, no less than and for the same reasons as the immutability of laws in the realm of nature. Such a man cannot, and would not if he could, avoid the perplexing question: What are we to think of the direct interventions of God narrated in the Bible, and what account are we to give of them?

The first thing to do is to examine the attitude of the Biblical historians who introduce these interventions in their narratives. Of the documents relating to Bible history, the two most important, which are now interwoven, but originally formed, as it were, the Synoptic Gospels of the tradition of the Prophets, are the *Jehovist* (J) and the *Second Elohists* (E). The chief charm of the *Jehovist* (J) is that we find there, side by side, in a peculiarly forcible contrast, the infancy of the human spirit and the highest perfection of the Prophetic inspiration. In its narratives God appears in the shape of a man; He walks about the garden of Eden, He converses with Adam, Cain and Noah; He Himself closes the door of the ark; He repents, grieves and swears oaths. Later we find Him coming down to the Patriarchs

<sup>1</sup> By *supernatural* must not be understood an event disturbing the order of nature and making God contradict Himself as existing in His own laws. By *nature* and *natural*, we mean all that belongs to the present constitution of the world and explicable by it and the laws governing it. *Nature* is man and the world in which he moves, such as they have become through the separation of the creature from the Creator: it is man and the world outside God's design, developing the energies of the initial creative act without the immediate and constant assistance of the creative principle, that is the Spirit of God. *Nature* is creation in its fallen state.

Thus interpreted, the word *natural*, as applied to man, acquires the sense of *carnal* or *animal*, as opposed to *spiritual*, which describes a man once more in a state of grace, returned to his allegiance, and restored to the privileges and powers of a child of God.

The word *supernatural*, so commonly used as the opposite of *natural*, is unfortunate. It implies a contradiction for which the Bible is in no way responsible. The oppositions recognized in Biblical theology are purely *moral*, and the terms used to express them should not be allowed to stray outside those limits. The Bible does not recognize two classes of phenomena, *nature* and *supernature*. It acknowledges one class only, and in this, things and beings are strong or weak, true or false, good or evil, living or dead, according as God does or does not inspire them, and according as they are in harmony or out of harmony with God.

and receiving hospitality from Abraham. The earth is literally His footstool. The *Second Elohists* (E), on the contrary, although more enamoured of the marvellous, admits no theophanies but in dreams, and everywhere sets angels or messengers as mediators between man and the Deity.

Thus our two most ancient documents, dating from the same period and dealing with the same facts, present the interventions of God in two different forms ; and the inference is that their pages, penned so many centuries after the events, do not give us a precise account of the manner of these heavenly interventions, but simply represent the very different ways in which the historians viewed them. We might, with the alternatives before us, settle the question to suit our philosophy or our inclination. We might decide in favour of the *Jehovist* and say, as has been so often done, that it was *necessary* that God should reveal Himself directly, and make Himself seen or heard in person, in order that man might be overcome by His presence, believe in Him and obey His instructions. But this *necessity* seems very difficult to defend after all the experiments made in diverse directions by modern science. Religious psychology has taught us to recognize a subconscious part in ourselves, an innermost sanctuary of our moral being, where slumber our potentialities, from whence rise the intuitions of our minds and hearts, and to which return the feelings and ideas which habit has turned into a second nature. Why should this not be the Sanctuary where God speaks to those whom He seeks and who seek Him? Medical and psychical science, with telepathy, mental suggestion and hypnotism, etc., reveal the existence of circumstances in which the spiritual influence of man over man is so great, that a human being can, as the case may be, force his will upon another, take possession of his nervous system, the vehicle of the mind, and make him, without any material help, experience sensations more real, I might say, than the material evidence of his senses. In the face of these facts and experiences, we dare not pretend that God at any moment in history was *obliged* to act upon man externally and to reveal Himself through material things, in order to reach the human will and to guide the

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world in obedience to His designs. Again, the psychology of natural religions and their evolution in history show the astonishing fertility of the religious imagination in multiplying instances of the direct action or appearance of the Deity, and in strengthening the bases of worship by striking prodigies. On the other hand, close study of the Biblical revelation quite convinces us of the unremitting care of the divine Educator to avoid everything that might injure the normal action of human liberty and so to have recourse constantly to human agents.

Taken together, these conclusions in different spheres of study teach us not to seek for the proofs of divine intervention, in external material phenomena recalling portents which abound in all mythologies. Much rather must we regard as the most positive marks of Revelation the moral and religious manifestations which stamp the specific type of the men of God in the Bible, and which are not to be found anywhere in the same degree in the other religious books of the world. We must never forget that the miracle of miracles is the man who reproduces in himself the characteristics of the son of God and that this miracle of regeneration is at present the only one which possesses any apologetic value.

Shall we then conclude that the attitude of the *Elohist* is the only true one, and that, by constantly placing an agent between God and man, it invites us to reduce the divine interventions to a form of inspiration? We might as well immediately follow the system to its furthest limit, and deny with Delitzsch (in *Babel und Bibel*) the revelation of God to Israel, and say with Professor Harnack<sup>1</sup> "the Protestant faith accepts no revelation except through persons. The whole series of pretended revelations is put aside: there is no revelation through things." That is uncompromising enough.

De par le Roy, défense à Dieu  
De faire miracle en ce lieu.

It will be readily understood that we do not set up to defend direct theophanies or personal appearances of God, which are

<sup>1</sup> In his notes on the German Emperor's letter to Admiral Hollmann on the subject of Delitzsch's lectures, Feb. 15, 1903.



besides put out of court by the whole teaching of the Old Testament, which can be summed up in the words: "No man can see God and live" (cf. *Exodus* xxxiii. 18-23). We do not either, in dealing with the Old Testament miracles, advocate a root and branch method of procedure. But it is certain that, taking it all round, the traditional theology, in its unsophisticated conception of the relations between God and Abraham, betrays less misunderstanding of historical reality than modern rationalism, which would show us Abraham as a thorough-going disciple of the theology of Auguste Sabatier. Abraham?—"An individualist who wishes above all to obey his conscience, his god within." The promises of God?—"They are the faith of Abraham assuming objectivity," etc.<sup>1</sup> It is easy to see what religion loses by such explanations and more difficult to discover what science gains by them. Granting the superior influence of spirit over matter—which the present age is less than any other able to refute—we confess we cannot understand why God, because He is a spirit, should be obliged to confine His activity within spiritual limits; nor how man, who knows only so much of his Creator as He has been pleased to reveal to him, can have the right to lay it down that God cannot have made use of the phenomenal world, in such and such circumstances, to instruct His servants, to sustain them in difficulties and to ensure the fulfilment of the designs of Providence. We see what is, but do not know what might be: and to limit God's means of action by our own knowledge is a piece of intellectual frivolity. If His Word could bring the world out of nothing and embody itself in Jesus Christ, why should the same Word have been unable to touch the ear of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and later on John the Baptist, the crowd and Saul of Tarsus? Without pretending in the least to clear up the mystery which will always brood over both the event itself and the circumstances of its happening, let us recall to the mind of those who deny that a voice from God can have been heard by Abraham, Moses or the Prophets, the occasions on which this same voice from heaven is mentioned in the Gospel narratives,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fulliquet, *Les expériences religieuses d'Israël*, 1901, pp. 11, 51.

At the Baptism, one of the principal events is precisely the decisive witness "This is my beloved Son." If we refuse to believe in this voice from heaven, we may just as well deny the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, or reject the whole scene, for all the parts are closely interwoven in this episode where miracle and history are to each other as soul and body (*Matt.* iii. 17 ; *Mark* i. 11 ; *Luke* iii. 22). At the Transfiguration, a voice coming out of the cloud, utters similar words together with this command, "Hear ye Him." We can call in question anything we please, but there is no more reason to deny the voice than to deny the Transfiguration itself (*Matt.* xvii. 5 ; *Mark* ix. 7 ; *Luke* ix. 35). In *John* xii. 30 Jesus declares, "This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes." If I believe in the historical character of the Gospels and the veracity of Jesus, when I read the words "Let not your heart be troubled," what critical or religious ground can I have to reject the testimony here borne by the Master to a voice from heaven? After the testimony of Jesus, we have that of St. Paul, the story of whose conversion, told twice by himself and once by the author of *Acts* (*Acts* ix. 4, xxii. 7, xxvi. 14) expressly mentions a voice from above. That this is no merely subjective revelation is sufficiently shown by the details of the scene and the general style of the narrative. If we suppress that voice, we invalidate the witness of St. Paul and the circumstances of his conversion become inexplicable.

Let us insist no further ; the problem being by its very nature insoluble, owing to our too limited horizon and the infinite resources of God, we must resign ourselves to ignorance, applying the apt saying of Calvin, "In matters that we cannot know, ignorance is the best learning." In substance, respecting the liberty of the Creator, we shall maintain the reality of a direct and personal intervention of God, wherever it can be proved by circumstances ; while as to the form, we shall avoid committing ourselves on the question of the *method*, which is beyond us, and shall adopt the most scientific attitude, viz. a reserve in which scepticism finds no place, but full play is given to humble trust, and which we may call "*the agnosticism of faith*."





## CHAPTER I.

### ABRAHAM.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM—GENESIS XI. 29—XII. 3; XV. 1-7; XVII. 1-7; XVIII. 18, 19. ABRAHAM AND LOT—GENESIS XIII. 2-13, 18; XIV. 1-3, 10-24; XVIII. 1-5, 17, 20-33; XIX. 27-29. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC—GENESIS XVII. 15, 16; XXI. 1-4, 6-8; XXII. 1-18.

#### *Section I. The Patriarch.*

ABRAHAM in his first appearance on the stage of history resembles his contemporaries, the famous shepherd-kings, Hiq Shausu,<sup>1</sup> "kings of the invaders," as they were disdainfully called by the Egyptians, who felt humbled at letting themselves be surprised and enslaved by these foreign nomads. Like the shepherd-kings, Abraham, under the pressure of famine, left the parched plains of Syria to go down into Egypt, the granary of the world. The friendly welcome he received from Pharaoh and the presence of camels in the royal gift show sufficiently clearly that the throne was occupied by a non-Egyptian dynasty, and that the Hyksos conquerors had not yet forgotten the time-honoured hospitality of the old desert-days. Like the shepherds, Abraham in his wandering life went where the season or the supply of pasturage led him, driving before him a whole tribe of herdsmen, slaves and archers, which the slightest alarm could turn into an army capable of deciding the fate of warring kings. We have seen how the wars between Aram, Elam and Chaldaea, in which Abraham, according to *Genesis* xiv., played a glorious part, have recovered their proper place in history.

<sup>1</sup> Whence the better known (Greek) form *Hyksos*.

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There is no detail of the private life of the Patriarch which is not explained by the customs of the age. Thus the substitution of Hagar for Sarah, and the conduct of Abraham towards his servant, which surprise and often offend us, are now perfectly explicable, thanks to the code of Hammurabi,<sup>1</sup> discovered at Susa in 1902, which throws considerable light on the matrimonial habits and common law of the regions in which Abraham sojourned. Both Abraham and Jacob after him did only what was customary in their time. It is also by a reference to his age that we must explain the apparently unjustifiable trial to which Abraham was subjected in the call to sacrifice his own son. In this, which at any other time and place might have seemed the height of immorality, there was nothing immoral, nothing even surprising to a Chaldaean of the third millennium B.C., in those wild lands of revengeful and bloodthirsty deities, where a thousand years later Jephthah could still pay to Jehovah the sacrifice of his own daughter. Just as the episodes of the life of Abraham, as reported in the Old Testament, are perfectly suited to the age which history assigns them, so the Patriarch in his way of life conducts himself like his contemporaries. When his interest demands it, he does not hesitate to lie; for instance, in his relations with Pharaoh and with Abimelech. We need not try to excuse these faults nor even to follow the lead of the Hebrew narrator, who is too inclined to treat things as if Elohim protected His followers *per fas et nefas*. God, no

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Matrimonial Laws in the code of Hammurabi. (See *The Oldest Code of Laws in the World*, by C. H. W. Johns. T. & T. Clark, 1903.)

The code, which raises the Chaldaean king to the rank of the greatest civilizers of antiquity, is inscribed on a block of diorite, which was discovered in 1902 by de Morgan among the ruins of a palace at Susa. It reveals a very advanced state of civilization, and contains a number of clauses of surprising foresight and fairness. The law of Retaliation of *Leviticus* appears already here, at least in an elementary form.

Hammurabi was not only a conqueror and a lawgiver. He liked to call himself "builder of the land," and held that Bel had given him power over all the land in order to work at the fertilization of the soil and the national prosperity. Numerous inscriptions tell us of the gigantic works he carried out during his reign of 55 years for the irrigation of the plains of Babylonia, Sumeria and Accadia.

Cf. Appendix I. "Moses and Hammurabi," and cf. p. 201.

doubt, consented to co-operate with sinners, but He never makes any compact with sin. For Him, the end never justifies the means, and, from the days of Eden to those of Ananias and Sapphira, lying is always Satan's masterpiece. Besides, if we go to the bottom of the narratives of Holy Scripture, we shall see that the facts proclaim what the historian appears to minimize. Each moral fault is followed by a punishment. After his lie, Abraham is forced to leave Egypt. For deceiving his father, Jacob is compelled to become an exile; and his sharp dealings at the house of Laban find their counterpart in his agonies at the ford of Jabbok. The sons of Leah sell Joseph, but they are reduced to imploring his forgiveness with tears in their eyes. Joseph, for his part, in the fourth generation, shows the moralizing influence of faith in the God of Abraham, and his virtue has its reward. It is none the less true that, morally, the Patriarchs, as they are presented to us in the Bible, are not necessarily superior to the persons with whom they have dealings, such as Abimelech, Lot, Hagar, Laban, Esau, Pharaoh, etc. They one and all were men who had no law but that of nature, and no knowledge but their instincts, who obeyed their interests or their inclinations, and whose lives rested on the common traditional morality of mankind.

What then was it which distinguished these men, no less primitive as they were than their fellowmen, from the rest of the human race? It was the privilege bestowed on them by Providence, of worshipping an Elohim Who had offered Himself to their adoration and Whose exceptional properties were to be for their invincible faith the school of Truth.

### *Section 2. The Elohim of Abraham.*

This Elohim, Who offered His alliance to Abraham, while apparently resembling the rest, in reality differs from them in every respect. Other Elohim were *geographical* gods, and their power extended no further than the territory where they dwelt. They might be compared in this respect to natural forces essentially belonging to the soil on which

their energy is displayed. But the Elohim of Abraham appears as an *historical* god ; in other words, as a divine person, independent of place, and bound only to His worshippers, Who steps into the arena of history to accompany those who trust in Him wherever they go and to control events for their good. Other Elohim were *ethnical* or *ancestral* gods, bound to the tribes which worshipped them, just as the great ancestor is bound to the race sprung from him and continues to protect it from his heavenly abode as he did while on the earth. But the Elohim of Abraham is bound by no tie to men : He has nothing to do with the Patriarch's family or the traditions of his people ; He offers Himself as a new-comer, He concludes an alliance, He proves His reality and His faithfulness by His blessings, but He does not tell His name : He is the invisible and mysterious Protector Who offers Himself to faith, stimulates prayer and fills the believer's heart with gratitude. Other Elohim were, by their very nature, *the result of circumstances* : fate bound together the god and his worshipper, who had equal need of one another. By the very fact that a man was born in such and such a valley or among such and such a tribe, he had such and such an Elohim and was bound to serve him, and the god in return was bound to protect the worshipper, on whose sacrifices he depended for life and prosperity. Abraham's Elohim is not an Elohim in the ordinary sense of the word : He became so by an act of free will, He chose His worshipper and elected him not because He had any need of him, but of free grace ; and the dominant factor in their covenant will always remain *election*, free grace and blessing entirely spontaneous on the part of divine Providence. Thus, in Abraham's religion, nothing is altered and yet all is altered. No doubt, his worship has all its roots in the traditions of his race, but it is differentiated so essentially by the circumstances of its production and the conditions of its growth, that in reality we may say the moulds of the Chaldaean *Elohism* are broken ; the old horizon of the ancestral and naturalistic cult has been widened to the true heavenly limits, and we have the true beginning of revealed religion in the crowd of new questions



that the cult of El Shaddai forces upon Abraham in his solitary meditations, whether he be walking slowly on with his caravan, or resting at mid-day in the doorway of his tent, or gazing into the depth of the Eastern night to trace out the paths of the stars.

*Section. 3 The Covenant.*

Now that we know the God and the worshipper, that is to say the two parties to the Patriarchal covenant, let us examine the covenant itself. In the first place, did it contain a specifically religious revelation? Did the appearance of God to Abraham correct the Patriarch's judgements on the nature of the Deity and of the worship due to Him? Did it make him a man apart, without his equal, in the human race? Certainly Abraham (as later Moses, the Prophets, and Mary) is chosen precisely because he is an exceptional man : that is the law of the Kingdom of Heaven, or let us say, the law of nature and of Revelation, which Jesus expressed in the words, "Unto him that hath more shall be given." Removed from every corrupting influence, developed under the working of divine Providence, and performed by a man whose moral distinction had caused God to choose him as the pioneer of the true faith among men, Abraham's worship was certainly and necessarily exceptional and without its equal. But it was none the less a worship suited to the first age of humanity, and based on the principles of primitive *Elohimism*. History teaches us that it was not to Abraham or the Patriarchs, but only to Moses, that the mystery of the absolute God was revealed Whose service is a worship uniting in itself the whole of morality and of religion. If we examine the few passages expressing the relations of God with Abraham, we find nothing new from the religious point of view. "Be faithful" is the whole of his creed ; "Be blameless" contains all his ethics. In other words : "Bring into action the resources which the natural conscience gives to every man to show himself worthy of his God's blessing." As for the worship, strictly speaking, the facts show it to have been in harmony with that of Abraham's contemporaries. It is idle for the Priestly Tradition to claim a Mosaic

origin for sacrifice and to pass over in silence the sacrifices of the Patriarchs. The Prophetic Tradition, agreeing in this with the history of all *Elohistic* religions, assigns to the worship of the sons of Terah the same features as to the other worships of patron-gods. The service of Abraham's Elohim contained no rite or ceremony which was peculiar to it. Its elements were the spontaneous elements belonging to the *Elohistic*<sup>1</sup> cult, viz. burnt offerings,<sup>2</sup> sacrifices, prayer, and sacred feasts and dances.

How then did the Patriarchs differ from other *Elohist*s of their time,<sup>3</sup> and what is the peculiar character of the Patriarchal covenant? The Patriarchs were men of faith, and the purpose of the Patriarchal covenant was the *education of faith* in the heart of a family chosen by God to display to the world the marks and powers of faith. Looked at from this standpoint, the history of Abraham and his successors marks itself off and rises above all the rest and becomes an object-lesson. In it are to be found all the facts required to set out the nature of religious faith, its difficulties and its triumph. The elements of faith are :

(1) *Knowledge* : every religious faith presupposes a divine message, a meeting with God.

<sup>1</sup> The Priestly Tradition states the sign of the patriarchal covenant to have been circumcision (*Genesis* xvii. 10). We may attach to this operation a religious significance ; but we cannot see in it a new institution, a specific revelation distinguishing the sons of Abraham from other nations. Circumcision was practised among the ancient Egyptians, and seems to have been in general use not only in the East but in all parts of the world. Note that the order is given to Abraham without any explanation : the practice is evidently familiar.

<sup>2</sup> In a burnt offering, the victim was burnt and completely consumed on the altar, in honour of the god.

<sup>3</sup> The King of Salem (Jerusalem ?) had as his Elohim *El Elyon*, just as Abraham had *El Shaddai* as his. The names and epithets vary, but the notion of *protecting god* remains throughout unchanged, and the qualifying epithets simply show that each worshipper regards his divine patron as the greatest and most powerful protector. Each Elohim is exalted as the lord of all. God, in revealing Himself to Abraham as an *almighty Elohim* (*El Shaddai*) made no change in the usage of the current terminology, but this time the epithet answered to the fact, for Abraham possessed really in his Elohim the divine Protector Whose word had created all things. See the Note on the Translation, p. 22, and the Note on the Documents of the Old Testament, p. 23.

(2) *Assent*: a spontaneous movement of the soul, a moral affinity and deep sympathy of the heart, which overrules the material perceptions and wins the message acceptance, at times even in the teeth of probability or preference or the cold calculations of reason.

(3) *Trust*: a triumphant effort of the will, which leaves our fate to the wisdom of Him Who gave the message and allowed the heart to perceive Him. Faith, for its realization, requires absolute trust, begetting obedience and raising it high above all human selfishness. That is what St Paul calls "the obedience of faith" (*Rom* i. 5) or the faith of the heart, the fount of justice (*Rom*. x. 9-10; cf. *Rom*. iv. 4, *Heb*. xi. 8-19).

If we really grasp the nature of faith, which is the loftiest expression of human dignity and at the same time the very substance of every moral religion, we see the importance of the education of faith in the Patriarchal age, and also understand how God could enlist for this purpose ideas and beliefs which were quite elementary, incomplete and mixed with human errors, and could never in themselves be more than mere provisional expedients. It is not a question of turning Abraham, by some trick of magic, into a philosopher; all the heavenly Father seeks is to awaken and develop in one of His children the sense of sonship. In the religious education of the Patriarchs we find very clearly marked the three constituent elements of faith. There is a clear message and a formal meeting with God. What did *Elohistic* worshippers expect from their patron-gods? Prosperity in their lands, victory in their battles and a numerous seed, multiplying the resources and strength of the tribe. God, presenting Himself in the guise of an Elohim offers to give Abraham what Terah's tribe have in vain asked of their Chaldaean Elohim. God promises him a fertile land, a royal power which no enemy can destroy and a numberless posterity, sprung from a son whom Sarah shall give him in his old age. To these promises, purely temporal and in line with Abraham's religious development, the Patriarch replies by an assent which binds him to the new Elohim, Whose benefits he accepts. This assent, which never failed

for a moment in the chequered career of the Patriarch, constitutes the moral unity of his conscience and contributes more than anything else to the impression of majesty left on our minds by Abraham's religious character. The reason is that the grand promises of Elohim are not unconditional, and the covenant agreed to by the son of Terah is a contract to which there are two parties. To each benefit of Elohim there must be a corresponding act of faith on the part of Abraham. To form and train this faith, God makes use of a feeling which seems to have been especially marked in the Patriarch's soul, namely, family affection.

The history of Abraham shows us that he clung above all to his kindred and that ties of blood were all powerful with him. It is by means of these that God speaks to him and brings him, through a series of conflicts between the interests of the flesh and the divine will, to transform the assent of faith into the proportions of a heroic trust and obedience. "Get thee out from thy father's house" (*Gen.* xii. 1). This is the first condition of the proffered benefits: to break with every family tradition, to leave in the house at Haran the *teraphim* or ancestral "penates," and to set out in an unknown direction under the auspices of the protecting Elohim. None can know what this first rupture cost Abraham. But he did not hesitate. Conquered by the divine voice, the Patriarch bursts the bonds of the flesh and sets out.<sup>1</sup> In this journey of faith, he takes with him an

<sup>1</sup> Abraham's crossing of the Euphrates earned for his descendants the name of *Ibrim*, *Hebreus*, which means "the men from the other side of the river." Maspéro rightly observes: "this name, which common usage restricts to the children of Israel, embraced, at the time of its widest extension, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Ishmaelites, Midianites, and many other tribes along the edge of the desert, east and south of the Dead Sea. They all claimed to be descended from Abraham, the son of Terah. But the Israelites claimed a monopoly of the privilege of legitimate descent from Abraham's marriage with Sarah. They used to tell slanderous or comic stories on the relations of the rest to the common ancestor. Ammon and Moab were sprung from an incestuous union, Midian were descended from Keturah, a wife of inferior station, Ishmael was the son of an Egyptian slave-woman, Esau had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage . . . etc."

The *ethnical* intention of the stories quoted above is evident. We have therefore omitted them in our study, whenever they were not essential to the religious history of the Patriarchs.

orphan nephew not included in the covenant and apparently allowed only out of kindness to share Abraham's destiny. Abraham's affection for Lot becomes in God's hands a means of training the Patriarch's faith and making it more inward and stronger. The first opportunity was supplied by a quarrel—such as often occur in a country where springs are scarce—between the herdsmen of Lot and those of Abraham. The Patriarch was obliged to separate from his nephew; but the way in which he did it showed the generosity of his character, while at the same time forcing him to rely more than ever on the faithfulness of his Elohim. Lot, to whom Abraham left the choice, took for himself the most fertile districts, the whole plain of the Jordan. Abraham, reduced to going southward, pitched his camp among the oaks of Mamre near Hebron; but God rewarded him for his noble act by the words, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it." The land was Canaan; and the divine promise was fulfilled. Israel, once in possession of the land of Canaan, transformed this corner of the world into a centre of religious civilization, from which has radiated in every direction honour and fear for the name of the God of Abraham.

Lot was not slow to draw Abraham into fresh difficulties. The lands where he lived, by their very wealth, excited the covetousness of armies in quest of adventure. One day Abraham got word that Sodom and Gomorrah had been conquered and Lot, stripped of all his goods, taken away prisoner. The kings who had combined in this campaign were powerful and terrible, but Abraham, strong in the justice of his cause, and sure of the aid of his Elohim, did not hesitate to sacrifice himself once more. He started out to rescue Lot with warlike resources certainly far inferior to those of the hostile coalition. God gave him the victory. His conduct towards Melchizedek and the king of Sodom brings out clearly the religious character of his career, the loftiness of his views and purity of his intentions. His victory is a triumph of faith. But his trials were not over and his affection for Lot was to subject his faith to a further test. Sodom and Gomorrah, wealthy cities on the

shores of the Dead Sea, were sunk in immorality, and God was resolved to visit their crimes with punishment, and informed Abraham of his intention. Now Lot lived in Sodom. Abraham, unable this time to have recourse to the sword, availed himself of prayer to save his nephew's life, and *Genesis* has preserved an argument of the Patriarch with his Elohim, in which, whatever it may owe to the literary talent of the historian, Abraham appears as the type and pattern of all intercessors. "Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked?" he says to God. "Peradventure there are fifty righteous in the midst of Sodom . . . peradventure forty . . . peradventure thirty . . . twenty . . . ten! For these ten's sake wilt thou not forgive?" and God answered, "I will forgive." History tells us that there were not even those ten righteous persons in the wicked cities, and that they were consequently destroyed. The East still retains the memory of this stupendous catastrophe, and still speaks of the "overthrown cities." But Abraham's intercessory prayer was answered nevertheless, for Lot miraculously escaped the terrible judgement of God. Thus it was that, living as a stranger in the promised land and waiting, in the vicissitudes of a nomad life, for the fulfilment of the divine promise, Abraham day by day was acquiring the habit of faith and of constant reliance upon the only protector, Elohim.

But the religious education of Abraham was still to be crowned or rather consecrated by a decisive trial. All the blessings foretold by his Elohim hung on the fulfilment of one supreme promise, the birth of a son. Elohim kept him waiting long for the posterity promised him against all hope. But "Abraham had faith in Elohim, and this faith was counted to him for righteousness." God rewarded Abraham's absolute trust by giving him Isaac. Henceforth the fulfilment was beginning, and the Patriarch, as he gazed at the stars, could ponder in his heart the glorious prophecy opening before him the future of an innumerable posterity (cf. *Gen.* xv. 6). He began to walk not by faith but by sight; and then it was that God bade him halt and claimed the sacrifice of his beloved son Isaac. This demand, which

called upon Abraham's piety to rise in its heroism to the pinnacle of absolute self-abnegation, set Abraham's faith in contradiction with his reason and his heart, but not with his conscience, for the sacrifice of the first-born was part of the normal ideas of the *Elohistic* cult. It was a common usage among the ancient Semites and a great number of the nations of antiquity: it was a custom which Abraham saw around him, and we find it again much later, not only among Canaanitish tribes, Moabites, Ammonites and Phoenicians, but even in the midst of the people of Israel themselves.<sup>1</sup> This being so, let us beware of perverting history by treating the sacrifice of Isaac as an inopportune attempt on Abraham's part, condemned by his Elohim, or even of approaching the subject with reservations which betray an unjustifiable shrinking and discomfort. It is surely better, and more scientific, to take the age of Abraham for what it was and the episode of Mount Moriah as what it lays claim to be. Nothing in Abraham's mental equipment or in his experiences in the land where he lived was of a nature to prevent Elohim from employing such a test as an educational instrument. Here, as everywhere, God takes man as he is, to put him through the salutary experiences destined to raise him to a higher level of morality. In this respect, it is natural to suppose that the final scene of the offering of Isaac was intended to teach the family of Abraham that their Elohim refused beforehand any offering of a human sacrifice. The trial of Abraham was none the less particularly tragic, especially because the offering of Isaac was a violent contradiction of the formal promises of Elohim, and annihilated at a stroke Abraham's most legitimate hopes. If Abraham, tried by his God, obeys without understanding, and renounces everything, his reason, his heart, his will and even the very promises of Elohim, to remain faithful to the will of his God, that is enough. He has faith, pure faith, faith which can serve as the principle for the development

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Judges* xi. 30; 2 *Kings* xvi. 3, xvii. 17, xxiii. 10; *Jeremiah* vii. 31, xix. 5, xxxii. 35; *Ezekiel* xvi. 20, etc.

Cf. also 1 *Sam.* xv. 33; 2 *Sam.* xxi. 6; and *Exod.* xiii. 13, 15, xxxiv. 20; *Num.* xviii. 15, etc.

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of *Jehovism*, that is to say of the revealed religion which is to teach men that God is not a divine power at the beck and call of human self-seeking, and that He expects from His true worshippers not material gifts or external sacrifices, but the gift of their heart and the sacrifice of their personal will. Abraham lays Isaac on the altar. In this sacrifice we see *Elohism* surpassing itself in an act in which *Jehovism* is already potentially contained. Abraham performs, by faith and without himself grasping its full meaning, a material sacrifice which presupposes and shows a total renunciation of his own will into the hands of God. As he ascended Moriah with his beloved son, the rationale of the frightful act he was preparing to perform was all contained in the words spoken two thousand years later by another Victim, a Victim Whose sacrifice was carried through: "It is so, Father, because thou didst wish it."

There is no more to be said. *Elohism* has done its work, the restoration of the religious principle in the midst of mankind. In Abraham we see the natural man worshipping, and, without knowing his fallen and miserable state, his inability to serve God, and all that he must suffer to regain His favour, coming before Him and crying in the sublime simplicity of his faith: "Here am I, God, to do Thy will." The altar of Moriah is the first stone of the kingdom of God: it is the real foundation of the chosen people. Bethel, Jabbok, the career of Joseph, follow in a chain of causes and effects, as the natural consequences of this act and the blessing attached to it. Like those gigantic mountain peaks soaring in the mists, of which, owing to their distance, we can see only the highest summits, Abraham, whose majestic figure overshadows the historical horizon, is known to us now only by the episodes which made of him a giant of faith. But these episodes have sufficed to leave him without a rival in human religion. The ancient prophecy is fulfilled, and Abraham, blessed of God, has been a blessing to all nations; so much so that now, more than four thousand years after his death, he still enjoys the unique privilege of being revered as their great ancestor by the majority of the human race. The two hundred and forty millions of



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Mahometans claim him as the real founder of the religion of the faithful ; the Jews say, " We have Abraham for our father " ; and Christians, since the days of St. Paul, recognize in him the forerunner of all those who are " justified by faith."

## CHAPTER II.

### ISAAC AND JACOB.

MARRIAGE OF ISAAC—GENESIS XXIV. JACOB BLESSED BY ISAAC—GENESIS XXV. 27-34; XXVII. 1-45. FLIGHT OF JACOB—GENESIS XXVIII. 10-22. JACOB AT THE HOUSE OF LABAN—GENESIS XXIX.-XXXI. 16. JACOB PURSUED BY LABAN—GENESIS XXXI. 17-XXXII. 2. JACOB THREATENED BY ESAU—GENESIS XXXII. 3-23; XXXIII. 1-17. CONVERSION OF JACOB—GENESIS XXXII. 24-32; HOSEA XI.

ISAAC, who makes so startling an entry in the drama of Mount Moriah, left scarcely any memorial in the national imagination. Most of the facts referring to him come to us rather as echoes of the history of his father than as fragments of personal biography.<sup>1</sup> Two episodes only convey an impression of reality, viz. the account of his marriage, in which we recognize in the minutest details the charm of the Eastern story-teller, and the narrative of the blessing of Jacob, which, in its poignant beauty introduces us to the most cunningly contrived and most tragic of domestic intrigues. That bold stroke, among other suggestive lessons, teaches us that it was not to Isaac, the slave of the sworn faith, nor to Abraham that Jacob owed his natural deceitfulness, but that in this he was truly his mother's son. When he had fled from Beer-sheba and sought refuge in Haran, he found in his maternal uncle

<sup>1</sup> See especially ch. xxvi., Rebekah passed off as Isaac's sister, the relations with Abimelech, the digging of wells, the renewal of the alliance, etc. In all cases Isaac appears as a second edition of Abraham. Cf. *Gen.* xii., xx., xxi. 22-34, etc.

Laban a man able to understand him and to deal with him as he himself so well knew how to deal with others. Rebekah and Laban explain, and, to a certain extent, are an excuse for Jacob's character.

Jacob generally labours under an evil reputation. The origin of his name and the first steps in his career prejudice us against him. One is tempted to call him "the first Jew." "For my own part," says one writer, "my recollection of the Bible lessons I received in my youth from a very orthodox teacher is that Jacob was extremely uninteresting and Esau worth a hundred of him." We are almost angry with Providence for choosing the younger in preference to the elder of the brothers. But deeper study of their two characters and lives soon disposes of such hasty judgements. Here are some words on this subject which are worth remembering:<sup>1</sup> "What secular history holds up for our admiration in its heroes is intellectual and especially moral strength. The Bible also has its heroes, and the power which makes them capable of entering into God's plans and becoming fellow-workers with Him in His work for humanity, is what the Bible calls 'Faith.' A man who can look beyond the present moment and sacrifice what he holds and sees to something in the far distance, a material advantage to the hope of an invisible and immaterial advantage of whatever kind—such a man, however low he may be in the scale of progress, is yet a man who is worth educating. Esau, the good, honest fellow, more prone to regret for the past than to preparation for the future, is a more attractive figure than his scheming and ambitious brother. But is he capable of improvement? He is not so bad, but he is as good as he ever will or can be. Perhaps a very clean and white pebble may please you better than a rough diamond covered with mud. But wait a little, wash the diamond, remove the mud, and cut it, and it will blaze with the very light of heaven! Such is the education of the men of faith in the Bible. 'It is by faith,' the book seems to say, 'that a man may please God.' Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, all of them,

<sup>1</sup> F. Bovet, *Examen d'une brochure de M. F. Buisson*, 1869, pp. 10-12.

according to M. Buisson, more blameworthy, according to the Bible, only equally blameworthy with other men, but in the midst of all their weaknesses and in their very weakness great through faith, these are the Alexanders and the Platos, the doers and the dreamers of Bible history ; these are the conquerors of the kingdom of heaven, the men who have understood the mind of God ! ”

The world is hard on Jacob, because his character is deceitful and complex and self-contradictory. He is the typical Hebrew, the pure-bred Israelite, uniting the qualities and the defects to which both the strength and the unpopularity of his nation are to be attributed. He owed to his mother Rebekah his ambitious, insinuating nature, and that cleverness, compounded of daring and craft, which excelled in pressing everything into the service of his interests. To his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham he owed his perseverance, his tenderness, his faith in the invisible, and that true mysticism which brings heavenly visions across the path of the earthly pilgrim : and, above all, an absolute trust in the existence of Elohim and the reality of His promises. Of these two opposite tendencies the former is at first uppermost. No doubt, we may say in a sense that Jacob walked by faith, inspired by a longing for the promised blessings. But what can we think of his conduct towards his father whom he deceives, towards Laban whom he betrays, or towards his brother whom he robs ? What are we to think of his conduct towards God Himself ? For it need not surprise us to learn that in this initiatory period, when humanity had not yet emerged from the childish notions of its natural religion, the Patriarchs served their Elohim as other nations served theirs, and regarded Him as a God to gladden with presents, to feed with sacrifices and to reward according to the measure of His usefulness. We may remember the Covenant of Bethel, in which Isaac's son, on the threshold of his religious career, has bequeathed to us the ideal formula of *Elohimism* in all ages : “ If Elohim will be with me,” said he, “ and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so

that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Elohim be my God . . . and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Tit for tat ; in this religion of give-and-take, it is God Who is judged according to His works. The compact of Bethel breathes a very inferior spirit to the godliness of Abraham. Abraham believed, but Jacob calculates. To Abraham obedience was the condition of success ; to Jacob success is the condition of obedience. Abraham's faith finds its expression in renunciation, whereas Jacob's is actuated by purely personal interest. Had this deterioration been allowed to develop, it would have meant the stultification of the Patriarchal covenant, the shipwreck of the new faith and a relapse into the *Elohism* of natural religion.

But this was not to be. God knew Jacob. He knew the riches of that complex character and the capabilities of the Patriarch's soul under the influence of trials. God took Jacob just as he was and let him learn in the school of life. Jacob put his trust in his Elohim ; and Elohim remained faithful to Jacob. He kept him on his journey, gave him, according to his request, bread to eat, and raiment to put on ; but He refused him peace, and Jacob lived on, blest but restless. He grew rich, but at the expense of his peace, happiness and security ; his uneasiness grew with his prosperity. One after another, his natural supporters turned against him : first he had to flee from his parents, then he was driven away by his father-in-law, and finally his brother, having heard of his good fortune, came against him with four hundred men, an army sufficient, if it chose, to annihilate him. A far cry indeed from the power, wealth and quiet majesty of Abraham ! But the God of Abraham was watching over Jacob. He had allowed him to experiment for himself on the path of selfishness, in order that in him the religion of the Patron-God (Elohim) might become conscious of itself, of its shortcomings, its faults and its duties. And now He let him fall into distress, because He knew that in distress Jacob's faith would recover itself and the agony at the ford of Jabbok would be as a fiery furnace from which *Elohism* itself would emerge refined and purified.

What was this struggle at the ford of Jabbok? The mystery enshrouding that eventful night cannot be dispelled by the cold light of science. Whether it was a dream, a vision, or a concrete fact, criticism cannot tell us. But the eye of faith recognizes in this scene a living parable symbolizing with more than human accuracy, the crisis of a man's conversion; and we may rest assured that God was really there, barring the Patriarch's way, and that it was from a very real struggle that Jacob came out, bruised, it is true, but a conqueror. The material and spiritual elements, the physical and moral struggles, are so closely interwoven in this event that it is impossible to separate them and that neither of the explanations offered, symbolical or material, is sufficient to explain its consequences or to exhaust its teaching. We must leave them both side by side, completing each by the other, and acknowledging loyally that at this distance of time it is beyond our power to establish in what particulars the moral fact has been materialized or the material fact spiritualized, by popular imagination, the mother of tradition. To understand this crisis in the life of Jacob, we must bear in mind the circumstances out of which it sprang. After all kinds of adventures, in which the bad faith of both uncle and nephew finally made further intercourse between them impossible, Jacob, to escape from the craft of his father-in-law, took to flight with his wives and herds, and wandered along the eastern bank of the Jordan. The reprisals he feared were not slow to overtake him. Laban, warned of the treachery, hurried out in pursuit of Jacob and his daughters. He came up with them, and it would have gone ill with Jacob, had his Elohim not intervened. Thanks to Him, the dispute ended not in a battle but in an alliance. Laban forgave his son-in-law for having robbed him and taken to flight, and a stone of witness, Galeed, was set up by common consent on the site of their parleying. At the moment of parting, Laban entreated the Elohim of Nahor, and Jacob that of Isaac, and these two Elohim, with that of their ancestors, are called to be witnesses of the reconciliation. But Jacob had escaped one danger only to fall into another. No sooner was he safe

from the anger of Laban than he was threatened by the rancour of Esau, who was only waiting for his return to meet him and annihilate him. Jacob heard the news, just as he was about to take a difficult step and cross a torrent ford. He knew Esau, and felt that he could hope for no quarter from him. Without his faith in Elohim, he would lose heart. Prepared for the worst, he made all his arrangements for the meeting and got ready presents with which to appease his elder brother. During the night he made his family cross the ford and remained where he was, alone. What occurred during this time of lonely meditation? By putting together the various documents dealing with it, we find that it was a night of struggle, of tears and prayers, in which Jacob's soul, having reached one of those moments of terror in which a man involuntarily reviews his whole life, perceived clearly that that life had been mis-spent: under the pretence of serving his Elohim, he had thought only of serving himself; his piety had been debased; instead of observing the covenant, he had exploited it; instead of letting himself be guided by his Elohim and honouring Him by his conduct—"Be upright" had said Elohim to Abraham—he had forced his Elohim into complicity in intrigues which dishonoured His name and desecrated the covenant. This Elohim, in whom Jacob still put an absolute trust, now revealed Himself as an angry God. He called upon Him to succour him, but there came an adversary to strike him and lay him low. Jacob accepted the challenge. Maddened with the agony, he tried a last appeal to his personal resources, by main force to wrest the victory and to force the hand, so to speak, of his Elohim in a desperate struggle in which the final supreme effort called out all his strength and all his faith. But at this point human strength no longer sufficed to gain the victory. In the crushing embrace of the mysterious stranger, Jacob felt the strength of his arm and the worthless excuses of his conscience giving and melting away. He felt the presence of God and that presence overwhelmed him. The time was come for him to feel himself too small for the blessings he had received and to beg to be treated, not according to his deserts, but according to

the mercies of Elohim. "Dic pereō ne pereas!" exclaims Augustine in speaking of Peter sinking in the waves. Hosea tells us that, in the storm which nearly sank him, Jacob owed his escape to some such cry:<sup>1</sup>

He had power with God : yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed : he wept, and made supplication unto him.

In a final effort which has lost all hope of victory and is a despairing appeal for mercy as well as the heroic outpouring of a loyal heart, the Patriarch says to his opponent: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And the language of faith was the language of victory. It was the expression of the radical change which had come about in Jacob, and it was to this that Jacob, "the supplanter," owed his new name of "Israel," that is to say, "he who wrestles with God and men and comes out of the struggle a conqueror."

Such, with its mystery, its contrasts and the tragic beauty of its lesson, was what we might call the conversion of Jacob. This drama has been compared with that of Gethsemane. It seems to us more true to say that the ford of Jabbok resembled the road to Damascus in giving to the world a new man. The moral transformation besides was not without its historical consecration; the new man received a new name, and Jacob became Israel. Be that as it may, in his last relations with Esau,<sup>2</sup> at El-Beth-el,<sup>3</sup> in the days of trial on the way to Ephrath and when his son Joseph was taken from him,<sup>4</sup> the conduct of Jacob is, as it were, on a loftier plane. We cannot look unmoved at the picture of the evening of that stormy life, crowning all the shifting fortunes of his career with his exile in Egypt, and presenting to us the heir of the Patriarchal riches and promises, broken by trials and by years, ruined by famine, exiled from Canaan, reduced to present his own children as a humble tribe of shepherds and condemned himself to end his days in a land of bondage at the mercy of a foreign tyrant. Surely all these afflictions would have made short work of a less vigorous faith. The faith of the victor of Jabbok survives

<sup>1</sup> *Hosea* xii. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Gen.* xxxiii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Gen.* xxxv. 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Gen.* xxxvii. 33-35.



every assault. Israel could have said, like Calvin : " Lord, thou crushest me as in a mortar, but it is enough that it is thy hand." After summarizing, in Pharaoh's presence, his earthly pilgrimage in these sorrowful words : " Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life," the Patriarch gathers together his children, blesses them in the name of their divine election, rehearses to them his last wishes in which all their unrealized expectations shine with the glamour of future certainties, and dies after commending them with unshakable trust to the faithfulness of his Elohim.

Such was Jacob. If Abraham was the giant of faith, one may say in a sense that Jacob was its martyr. Both alike were tried ; but whenever Abraham was tried, Elohim everywhere showed Himself his shield and recompense, whereas Jacob is struck and the blows go home and he receives no reward. The religious progress achieved in the interval between them is marked by this, that *Elohism* in the person of Jacob is learning to relax the bond which in the past united religion and a utilitarian code of ethics, to love the God Who chastens, to obey without hope of reward, to separate devoutness from temporal prosperity and to let faith ripen in the midst of adversity.

## CHAPTER III.

### JOSEPH.

JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN—GENESIS XXXVII. JOSEPH IN EGYPT—GENESIS XXXIX., XL. JOSEPH PHARAOH'S MINISTER—GENESIS XLI. JOSEPH SAVES HIS FAMILY—GENESIS XLII.-XLVI. JOSEPH'S ORGANIZATION OF EGYPT—GENESIS XLVII. DEATHS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH—GENESIS XLVIII.-L.

THE proof of the moral and religious transformation of Jacob during the last years of his life is contained in Joseph. Joseph, whose touching history has been handed down to us with more detail than any other in the pages of *Genesis*, is not only the son of Jacob's latter years, he is above all his *spiritual* son. His birth was an answer to prayer, vouchsafed to the wife whom Jacob loved and whose loss he mourned to his dying day, and Joseph as a child lived with his father in an intimacy which tradition has not allowed to be forgotten. Very like the old Patriarch in sensitiveness, force of character and high capacity, the young son of Rachel understood better than his brothers the religious aspirations and moral experiences of the aged Israel; and being the favourite companion and confidant of his father, he was constantly under the spell of his influence and thus learned to know and fear the Elohim of Abraham, terrible in His punishments and marvellous in His deliverances. The *Elohism* taught by Jacob to Joseph is purified of all its dross. The religion of interest has become, no doubt in an elementary form, the religion of conscience: it is a regenerate *Elohism*. Undoubtedly the jealousy of his brothers was due to his father's preference for him and to the strangeness

of the dreams which he so naively told ; but the chief cause of their hatred was his moral superiority which inconvenienced and humbled them. The life of Joseph among his brothers was in a sense like that of Jesus among His, an involuntary but continual reproof. Joseph was a judge who must be removed. So the plot was contrived with the consent of them all, and the first favourable opportunity found them ready for the crime.

The history of Joseph in Egypt, of his sufferings, his promotion and the events which made him the saviour of his family, is told us by the two documents which make up the Prophetic Tradition.<sup>1</sup> One of these, the *Second Elohists*, written in the northern kingdom, says that Joseph was stolen by Midianites, and makes Reuben his brothers' adviser and Joseph's protector. According to the *Jehovist*, written in the Southern kingdom (Judah), Joseph was sold by his brothers to some Ishmaelites, and Judah throughout the story occupies the leading position assigned in the other document to Reuben. The most striking feature in Joseph's career, always faithful as he is to Elohim in his moral conduct and always protected and blessed by Him, is the part played in it by dreams. Modern rationalism thinks it supplies the most reasonable explanation of this fact by the general declaration that "these dreams were all invented after the event to suit the requirements of the story." What requirements? This they omit to tell us, and for a good reason. On the other hand, the people of the East had their own habits of mind, and the history of the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt has its own logical necessities. Would it not be more scientific to look in these for the explanation of Joseph's dreams? "In the old days, among the ignorant and superstitious populations of the East, dreams were credited with a very high importance: men tried to discover their meaning and saw in them a prophecy of coming events, and, as it were, a revelation of the future."<sup>2</sup> In Egypt dreams were supposed to be inspired

<sup>1</sup> The Priestly Tradition, no doubt, recounted it also, but only a few sparse fragments remain.

<sup>2</sup> E. Montet, *Histoire Sainte*, p. 16.

by the god Thot: this being so, why should not Joseph's Elohim have employed a means thoroughly recognized and perfectly adapted to His purpose to come to His servant's help and prepare the way for the deliverance of His people? As for the logical necessities of the Hebrews' residence in Egypt, they are obvious. The family of Abraham, mere Semitic shepherds, could not have been welcomed in Egypt and settled in a fertile province where they maintained themselves till their prosperity threatened the safety of the sovereign, unless at the outset some very special obligations had secured for that family the goodwill of the Pharaohs. And we find these in Joseph's signal services. But how are we to explain these in their turn or the unheard-of good fortune of the Hebrew slave, unless it be that some extraordinary event forced him into the monarch's notice and let him see in this humble captive the possessor of exceptional shrewdness and ability? Behind the accounts we have, the sequence of historical events is much stricter than at first sight appears. We may reject the episodes reported in *Genesis*, but to restore the balance of the story, we shall have to invent equivalents to fill their place. We shall, therefore, be best advised to take the accounts as they are, and to accept their contents substantially, while at the same time showing a readiness to acknowledge that here, as in the biographies of Elijah and Elisha for instance, oral tradition may have amplified history, heightened emphasis and magnified reality to a degree which we can no longer estimate at its proper worth.

The history of Joseph not only brings out his virtue under temptation, his faith under trials, wisdom in difficulties and generosity in success, but attributes to him the qualities and actions of a great statesman. Pharaoh gives to the Hebrew slave who has become his Prime Minister the significant name of *Zaphenath Paneah* ("the regenerator of life") because Joseph, acquiring power at a time when the whole fortune of the Pharaohs was in danger of shipwreck, knew how to take advantage of the crisis to remodel the institutions of Egypt, disarm the feudal lords and gather all power, land and revenue into the monarch's hands.

Ramses III., many centuries later, calling himself the sole owner of the land and declaring, "I have caused trees and shrubs to grow in the whole of Egypt, and I have suffered men to sit down under their shadow," alludes to a state of affairs which Herodotus attributes to Ramses II. as the legendary benefactor beyond whom the researches of Greek historians ventured with uncertain steps. But we know now that the influence of Ramses II. has been exaggerated, and that he has been credited with many institutions which owed their existence to his predecessors.<sup>1</sup> Without asserting that Joseph's reform under the Hyksos was the beginning of a permanent regime, it is interesting to learn that the data of *Genesis* on this subject agree perfectly with what history allows to have been the organization of Egypt from the middle of the second millennium B.C., and the institutions which the Pharaohs, subsequent to the Hyksos kings, endeavoured to perpetuate. It has been justly pointed out that the rate of taxation prescribed by Joseph is far from exorbitant, considering the extreme fertility of Egypt and the heavy expenses laid on the Government by the irrigation-works. To this day the soil does not belong to the fellaheen but to the Khedive, for whose benefit they cultivate it. A fellah, on being asked if he thought Joseph's tax of one-fifth too oppressive in view of modern conditions of life, replied, "I should be only too happy if I could keep for myself one-fifth of my produce."

The account of the descent of the Israelites into Egypt and their settlement in Goshen is most pathetic and needs no comment. It should be noticed that the land of Goshen, lying beyond the arable land touched by the Nile inundations, spread its pastures right up to the marshes and sandy wastes. It stretched between Heliopolis in the South and Mendes in the North. Thanks to the excavations of the Genevese Egyptologist, E. Naville, some of the sites of the Israelites' residence have been discovered.<sup>2</sup> The providential character of this residence can never be exaggerated. The

<sup>1</sup> It appears even that in inscriptions his architects sometimes erased earlier names and put his in their place.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* Pithom (in 1883), where the Israelites were employed on great buildings.

land of promise where the sons of Abraham must one day settle as conquerors, was on the eve of a crisis which the tribe of Jacob would hardly have survived. Egyptian armies were starting on their Eastern conquests, and Canaan was the first scene of invasion. The isolated resistance of Jacob's family against Pharaoh's armies would have led to nothing but its dispersion and annihilation; and if misfortune had induced it to unite itself by a defensive alliance to the Canaanitish principalities in whose midst it lived, the rapid result would have been the deterioration of its religious inheritance, and the ruin of Israel's independence and the promises of Elohim. God therefore sheltered His people in a safe harbour before the storm. Instead of allowing the family of Jacob to be scattered like those of Abraham and Isaac, He so ordered events as to concentrate it, out of the reach of violent commotions, in a land where a common exile might strengthen the bonds of kinship, and the humiliations of vassalage and the contempt of an arrogant idolatry might stimulate the hopes implanted by the ancestral Elohim, till the day when open persecution should breed in the oppressed the courage to work out their own deliverance. To these negative advantages the residence in Goshen added the positive one of bringing the patriarchal family of rough and primitive shepherds into contact with the civilization and culture of, very probably, the most highly developed nation of the age. For though a nomad life in Canaan was admirably fitted to make an Abraham, it could never have produced a Moses. There was wanted for the training of Israel for its future destiny an environment which should subject it to a *collective* tribulation, so as to implant in it the desire of founding a community dependent not on men but on God alone, and ready to walk by faith under the guidance of Jehovah, as formerly Abraham walked by faith under the guidance of Elohim. That environment was Egypt, and Joseph was the man selected by Providence through whom, at the proper time, Egypt became the Hebrews' second fatherland.

## CONCLUSION.

From what has preceded we may draw two conclusions, one historical and the other religious. Historically, our study has shown us that those who accept quite literally the narratives of the Patriarchal age, and those who treat them as legendary or mythical, are equally mistaken.<sup>1</sup> The former do not take into account the ethnical elements in these accounts and the part played by imagination in the age-long elaboration of annals like those of the ancestors of Israel: while the latter, confusing criticism with scepticism, have failed to purge their method of the mental habits of the old rationalism. Incapable as they are of grasping the religious purpose of the Old Testament or of recognizing the plan and initiative of God in the history of the world's salvation, they have involuntarily warped the result of their scientific researches and have shown themselves ready to deny historical facts which the better informed orientalism of to-day has demonstrated to be in perfect agreement with the customs and circumstances of the age dealt with in the Bible. The age of the Patriarchs is still wrapped in much obscurity. Till present-day discoveries set it in the full light of history, we must walk over the ground with caution. Rather than multiply *stories* in our religious teaching—at the same time allegorizing till we completely lose sight of the first meaning of the accounts—we must endeavour to understand *the history* of the religious thought which underlies the stories, and confine ourselves in our explanations to the facts least contested by criticism and most weighty from the point of view of the plan of Revelation. In examining these facts themselves, we must insist not so much on their historical details as on the educational value

<sup>1</sup> To regard a narrative as legendary or mythical is to attach no historical value to it. A *legend* is a popular story resting on a historical but distorted foundation, or, more frequently, on a foundation supposed to be historical and put forward as such, while being in fact purely imaginary. A *myth* is a story without any historical foundation, and composed of supernatural elements. In Aristotle's phrase, a *myth* is a "lying tale intended to convey the truth." We cannot agree to the comparison of Abraham and his descendants with the heroes and demi-gods of the Greeks and Romans, being firmly convinced of the historical reality of the Patriarchs, and the *historical* groundwork of the traditional accounts of their lives.

which has secured them immortality in the religious instruction of men, because with irresistible reality they revive before our eyes the first heroes who in the history of Redemption had personal experience of God. This experience, as already pointed out, was real but rudimentary. Religiously speaking, the work of Revelation had not gone beyond the elementary training of faith. All that God expected from His new people as represented by the Patriarchs, was that it should acknowledge that it had a Father, a faithful and powerful Elohim, "the shield and the recompense" of those who put their trust in Him. Nothing need surprise us in the divine procedure, unless we have forgotten how God acted in the days of Paradise. Before commanding Adam not to touch the fruit of the tree of knowledge, He had revealed Himself to him as the all-powerful and all-good Creator, as a Father full of thoughtful love. By His action previous to the command, God had won the moral right to give this command, and man, owing to his relation to God, could not transgress the command without being immoral and guilty. Thus God acted when He renewed with humanity the relations suddenly broken off by Adam's fault. Before giving commands and undertaking the education of this new humanity of whom Abraham was to be the father, God takes care first to develop in it the religious instinct. He wishes to draw it to Him by the feeling that He, and He only, is its God, its Protector and its Father. He wishes to win the right to be obeyed by the benefits which He heaps on the Patriarchs in answer to their faithfulness. When a father begins to appeal to his child's conscience, to advise, command and punish, the child listens, accepts and recognizes his father's rights and asks his forgiveness, because the father, before any thought of education, has let the voice of nature speak, has nursed the child, shown himself his protector, surrounded him with attention and tenderness; in a word, has shown himself to him as his father. God acted no otherwise with humanity, and the only object of the Patriarchal age was to put the ancestors of Israel in a position of filial dependence and filial affection towards God. Every education, to be moral, must begin by such an initiation.



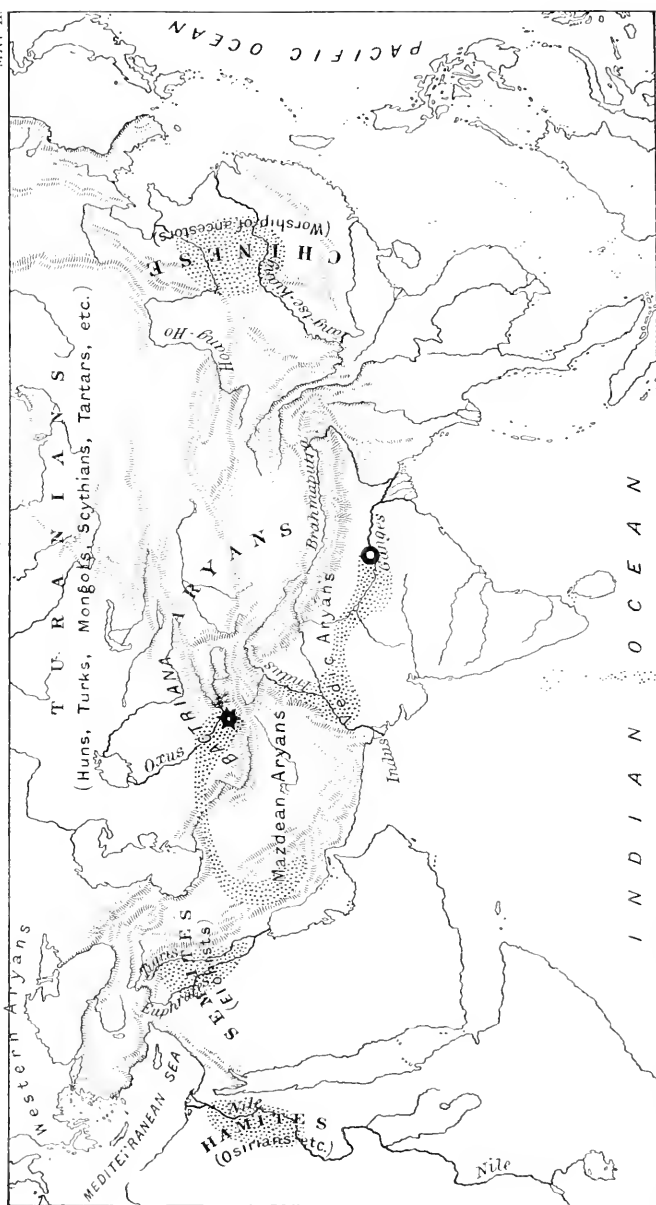


# FLUVIAL CIVILIZATION

## RACES AND RELIGIONS

ABOUT THE 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY B.C. (AGE OF NOSES)

MAP II.



Stadford's Geog. Atlas, London.

★ Scene of Buddha's ministry.  
● Home of Zoroaster.

## PART THE THIRD.

### THE REVELATION OF JEHOVAH.

#### THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

#### INTRODUCTION.

##### *Section 1. Religious Belief in the Fourteenth Century B.C.*

IT is no merely idle question to ask what was the condition of the religion of the world when Moses started on his career. Whatever the originality of his genius or the depth of God's seal upon his conscience, every man is the product of his environment and the child of his age. Now Moses was set by Providence in the midst of conditions which made it peculiarly easy for him to benefit by contact with a society, which itself, by its geographical position, the expansion of its commerce and the antiquity of its civilization, had as it were been marked out by destiny to concentrate in itself the enlightenment of all nations. Egypt had for two thousand years been looked up to as the world's intellectual exchange, and was so proud of its own progress that, at the advent of Greek philosophy, it did not hesitate to compare its first attempts to the lisping of a little child. What had Moses learnt in Egypt? On what lines had the mental growth of the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter progressed, and, in that exceptionally fortunate environment, what echoes can have reached him of the religion of the other great nations of the world? All this it is important for us

to know, if we are to form a clear idea of the genius of the greatest of all the religious innovators of antiquity. We must know it too to be able to appreciate the extent and originality of the revelation of which he was the mouthpiece. In the age of Moses, what did men know of God, evil and the future life?

If we glance at a map of the world as it was in the fourteenth century B.C., we see four groups clearly differentiated from the mass of mankind, whose civilization was still at the stage when man, incapable of building or of social organization, shelters his miserable existence in caves and other dwelling-places protected by their natural peculiarities. These four groups together constitute fluvial civilization. They offer the earliest type of solidly organized society concentrated on the banks of the great rivers. They are :

1. The Hamitic group, *i.e.* Egypt, which originally covered only the banks of the Nile.
2. The Semitic group, with the Chaldaeans and Assyrians, on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates.
3. The Chinese group, established on the land between their gigantic rivers.
4. The Aryan group, which at this period abandoned the central plateau of Asia to seek its fortunes along the great rivers flowing from it, *viz.* the Indus, the Ganges and the Oxus.

During this "fluvial" epoch, the hegemony of the civilized world belonged first to the Hamites, with Egypt and proto-Babylonian culture, and later to the Semites with the Chaldaeans. But in no long time the Aryans took the lead, and spread from East to West, along a climatic line very favourable to their expansion. They invaded Europe, colonized it, ringed the Mediterranean with ports and markets and thus founded the maritime civilization which was the glory and the fortune of the Greeks, till the day when the Roman Empire, with its genius for organization, its perseverance in toil and its military power, broke up the then-known world into a series of provinces bound together

by wonderful roads, all leading to Rome. That was the dawn of *universal* civilization.

When Moses was born, fluvial civilization, which had already long existed in the time of Abraham, was nearing its close. Maritime intercourse was beginning to develop, and the commerce between Hamites and Semites, and between Semites and Aryans, already made mutual knowledge and enlightenment possible between the various religions of the world. We cannot here picture in detail the cults of the age of Moses; but the texts we quote speak for themselves, and give us, if not as complete, certainly more fair and more direct a notion of the religion which inspired them than a complete analysis could possibly convey.

## *Section 2. Hamitic Writings (Egyptian).*

Egyptian literature is the oldest in existence. In it we come into contact with the moral and religious sense in its most ancient form. Here is a page from the oldest book in the world. It contains fragments of several authors, the first of whom, the wise Kakimni, lived under the third dynasty, in the fifth millennium B.C., *i.e.* in the epoch to which the Jewish Priestly Tradition assigns the Creation of the world.

"A song respecting that which is just unlocks the secret of my silence . . . words armed with swords against him who transgresseth the (right) way. . . .

"When thou happenest among a company who hate the meats that thou lovest, it is for thee a short moment of torment. But eschew intemperance . . . for a draught of water sufficeth to quench thirst and a mouthful of melon to refresh the heart.

"That man is worthy to be despised who is a slave unto his belly, and who spendeth his time in sloth. . . . If thou sit with an eater who eateth till he be constrained to take off his girdle, or drink with a drinker who hath entertained thee and satisfied his craving as a crocodile upon the meat . . . how loathsome it is to behold a man deprived of thought and no longer master of his words! . . . Verily, he is a reproach to his mother and to his kindred. And this is the desire of all, O that thou wouldst depart!

"The ways of God pass all understanding. . . . Let a man so act that his children may praise him, when he shall have finished his course. . . .

"As touching that which is written in this book, if ye put it in practice, as I have set it down, ye shall derive therefrom a multitude of benefits. If ye act accordingly, if ye keep it, as it is written, it will be sweeter to your heart than all that ye could find in all the land, in whatsoever state ye may be."

There is no need to dwell upon the high state of moral, religious and literary development presupposed by these six-thousand-year-old sentences. In the same papyrus there are some fragments which we owe to the governor Ptahhotpu, who lived in the fourth millennium B.C., under the Fifth Dynasty. Ptahhotpu, as a disappointed old man, comes to his master, the Pharaoh Assi, and begs for permission to give future generations the benefit of his experiences.

"Sire, my Lord," says he, "when age is come and old age draweth near, feebleness cometh and second childhood, on which new wretchedness falleth every day: the eyes are minished and the ears are straitened, strength faileth albeit the heart ceaseth not to beat, the mouth holdeth its peace and speaketh not, the heart is darkened and remembereth not yesterday, and the bones are full of pain. All that was good becometh evil, and taste departeth altogether. Old age maketh a man wretched in all things, for his nostrils are stopped and cease to draw breath, whether he rise up or sit down. If the humble servant who is before thee receive the command to speak as beseemeth an old man, then I will declare unto thee the words of them that know the history of the past, of them that have heard the gods, for if thou do as they do, discontent shall be destroyed among men and the twain lands shall labour for thee!"

Pharaoh very courteously authorizes Ptahhotpu to gratify his desire, and the latter writes a long essay, often obscure and even untranslatable, but containing passages like the following:

"The fool is disobedient: he produceth nothing, he considereth that knowledge is as ignorance, virtue as vice:

wherefore also his life is as death." . . . "Inspire not fear in any man, for it is not God's will." . . . "If thou art wise, thou wilt bring up thy son in the love of God. If he be good and devote himself for thee and increase thy possessions, recompense him. But if the son thou hast begotten be evil, turn not thy heart away from him: thou art his father: therefore exhort him." . . . "If thou hast raised thyself after being poor, if thou hast heaped up wealth after being in want, if, in a word, becoming the first man in the city, thou art renowned for thy well-being, be not puffed up with thy riches, for the author of all blessings is God. Despise not him who is as thou once wast; for he is still thy neighbour." . . .

All this might be mistaken for the wisdom of Solomon. There is nothing new under the sun. Here is another papyrus, which also carries us back to the earliest age of Egyptian literature. It replies to the pessimism of Ptah-hotpu by an optimism worthy of the most recent speculations of that most modern philosopher, Metchnikoff. The Egyptian, engaged in a dialogue with his soul,<sup>1</sup> really seems to have possessed the "instinct of death" which, according to that distinguished member of the Pasteur Institute, ought to be in every individual the result of the "normal wear and tear of the organism."<sup>2</sup> The Egyptian thus addresses his soul:

"I say unto myself every day: As is the return to health of the sick man who goeth out into the court after his distress, so is death.—I say unto myself every day: As is the smelling of a perfume, as is the sitting down in the shelter of a curtain, on that day, such is death.—I say unto myself every day: As is the smelling of the perfume of a bed of flowers, or the sitting on the strand of the Land of Drunkenness, such is death.—I say unto myself every day: As the road which goeth through the flood, as the soldier who marcheth forth and no man may withstand him, such is death.—I say unto myself every day: As when the sky groweth calm again, as when a man setteth out to hunt with a net and findeth himself suddenly in a country he knoweth not, such is death."

<sup>1</sup> Berlin papyrus, translated by Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> E. Metchnikoff, *Etudes sur la nature humaine*, 1903.

All this philosophizing presupposes a real power of moral observation. In another work, a scribe of that primitive epoch describes to his son the wretchedness of the toilers :

"I will tell thee how the stone-mason is exposed to the windy gusts, building painfully, bound to the capitals of the houses. Both his arms are worn away in his labour, his raiment is in disorder, and he riseth but once in the day. When he hath his bread, he goeth home and beateth his children. The weaver, within the house, is more unhappy than a woman. His knees are as high as his heart. He tasteth not the free air. If, one single day, he fail to make the quantity of cloth which is commanded in the ordinance, he is bound like the lotus of the marsh. The dyer's fingers stink with the smell of rotten fish, his eyes are overwhelmed with weariness, his hand never ceaseth. I have considered all manner of handiwork, and in truth there is nothing higher than the knowledge of letters. He who hath set himself from his childhood to derive benefit therefrom, he is honoured."<sup>1</sup>

Not a shadow of social prejudice in all these reflections ; but only the careful inculcation of self-interest and the hunt after good places. Place-hunting ! The Egyptian is busy with it not only for this world but for the next. His religion, starting with the *Elohistic* belief already mentioned, was transformed, by the changes of capitals, and the unification and disturbances of the Empire, into polytheistic systems in which the gods in "Triads," "Ogdoads" or "Enneads" (groups of three, or eight, or nine) follow and supplant one another as the dynasties come and go. The result was that, through all these transpositions of names and rites to find expression for a religious feeling which was always the same, the devout came to see that, under varying names, it was after all always the same god who was worshipped ; and that when a prayer was offered up to give voice to the yearnings of the heart, the gods invoked in a comprehensive act of worship were not so much a number of separate celestial powers as a variety of names for a single almighty, everlasting and perfect Being, of whom through

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Seignobos, *Histoire des anciens peuples de l'Orient*, p. 20.



the many-coloured veil of the official mythology the devout soul could dimly catch a glimpse. Of this nature was the worshipper's feeling towards the great Amon, of Thebes, invoked under the three divine names, Amon-Râ-Harmakhis.<sup>1</sup>

"From thy awaking thou showest kindness, Amon-Râ-Harmakhis, lord of the two horizons! O benefactor! flaming and resplendent thou runnest across the heaven above, and thy enemies are brought low. . . . Gods and men applaud and kneel down before the sun . . . their heart is glad because Râ has overthrown his enemies. The heavens rejoice and the earth is glad, gods and men keep holiday, in order to give praise to Râ-Harmakhis. . . . Thou drivest back the wicked . . . thou has utterly destroyed the impious, the adversary of Râ falleth into the fire. . . . Mighty is Râ, weak is the impious! Exalted is Râ, the impious lieth on the ground! Great is Râ, little the impious! Full of light is Râ, full of darkness the impious! Good is Râ, evil is the impious! Powerful is Râ, the impious is miserable! O Râ, grant long life unto Pharaoh! Give bread unto his belly, water to his throat, and perfumes to his hair! O arise, Amon-Râ-Harmakhis, self-created! All the ways are full of his rays. . . . Sacred Hawk with lightning wing, Phoenix of many colours, mighty lion self-existing. . . . Thy roaring brings down thine adversaries, while thou drivest forward the great ship. Child born anew every day, old man that winnest unto eternity! So high that none may attain unto thee! Lord of the mysterious abode, hidden Being whose likeness no man knoweth! Lord of years, who givest life unto whomsoever it pleaseth thee. . . . He created the earth, silver, gold and lapis lazuli. He maketh the grass for the cattle and herbs for the use of men. He maketh alive the fishes in the river, the birds in the air, by giving breath to beings enclosed in an egg. He giveth life to creeping things and maketh the food of birds. Creeping things and birds are all equal in his eyes. He maketh provision for the rat in his hole and nourisheth the bird on the branch. Men come forth from his two eyes, all the races of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Seignobos, *op. cit.* p. 61.

men. 'Hail to thee!' say they, 'we fall down before thee, who didst create us. Thou art blessed by every creature, in the height of heaven, in all the wide earth, and in the depths of the seas. The gods bow before thy holiness, and the souls magnify him who made them, saying to one another, 'Be in peace, father of fathers of all the gods, creator of all living things, maker of all things, sovran king, chief of the gods!'"

In spite of all the eccentricities, the nature-cult and the obscurities of such an invocation, we are forced to recognize in the sentiments expressed as it were an effort of the soul to rise to the conception and belief of the one God. Elsewhere, we find the filial dependence on God expressed with rare power. Thus, in the prayer uttered by Ramses II. (Sesostris) in a battle, in which, like Clovis at Talbiac, the only help he could rely on was that of the High God:<sup>1</sup>

"Where art thou, oh my father Amon? Can a father forget his son? Have I not offered thee sacrifices unnumbered? I have filled thy holy dwelling-place with my prisoners; I have built thee a temple for millions of years, I have given my goods for thy stores, I have offered thee the whole world to enrich thy domains. . . . I invoke thee, oh my father Amon; here am I in the midst of many peoples. My soldiers have deserted me: not one of my horsemen has looked towards me. . . . But I think that Amon is worth more to me than a million of soldiers, than a hundred thousand horsemen, than ten thousand brothers or sons assembled together. The works of men are nothing; Amon will get the victory over them. The voice has sounded even unto Hermonthis, Amon cometh at my call, he giveth me his hand, and speaketh behind me, 'I hasten to thee, O Ramses, I am with thee. It is I, thy father! I am the Lord of strength, and I love valour: I have recognized a brave heart and I am content. My wish shall be fulfilled.' I utter a loud cry of joy. On the right I shoot my arrows and on the left I overturn the enemy. The two thousand five hundred chariots which surround

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the *Poem of Pentaur*, attributed to the age of Moses, 14th century B.C.

me are broken to pieces. No one findeth a hand to fight against me, their hearts fail them in their breasts, and terror unnerves them. They no longer know how to shoot their arrows, and have no more strength to hold their lances. I hurl them into the waters, like the crocodile; they lie with their faces to the ground, and I slay in the midst of them. . . . The prince of the Khetas draweth back with fear. He sendeth forth numerous chiefs, riding in their chariots. . . . I threw myself upon them, my hand devoured them in the space of a moment. They said, one to another, 'It is not a man who is among us, it is Sutku, the great warrior. These are not the deeds of a man. Let us hasten, let us fly from before him.'"

Ramses then encourages his soldiers :

"Stablish your hearts," saith he, "ye behold my victory, and yet I was alone! It was Amon who gave me strength."

The most interesting point to note in pre-Mosaic Egyptian religion is the belief in immortality, in final retributions, and in the necessity of being found pure or '*makheru*,' that is to say '*truthful*,' to share in the everlasting felicity of Osiris' paradise. The Egyptians were haunted by the thought of death; witness the Pyramids, the mummies, and all the great inscribed monuments of the Nile valley. But the most interesting document of all is the famous *Book of the Dead*, or burial liturgy, of which we possess numerous manuscripts, one of them the hieroglyphic copy at Turin belonging to the age of Ramses II. There were therefore copies of this book in existence before the birth of Moses. Space forbids us to detail its contents; but we shall quote its most interesting page, that dealing with the Last Judgement, the conception of which shows striking analogies with the post-Prophetic Jewish theology. After encountering all kinds of difficulties on the road, the soul of the departed, triumphant over all the oppressions of the demons, arrives before the throne of Osiris. In the hall of justice, around the supreme Master, the Court is composed of gods and goddesses; on the left and right, forty-two jurymen, dead and risen again like Osiris, wait in silence, motionless in

their tightly fitting winding-sheets. The soul steps forward into the centre of the hall, presents on its hands the image of its heart, and recites its creed :<sup>1</sup>

“ Hail to you, masters of Truth, hail to thee, great God, master of Truth and Justice ! I am come under thee, my master, I am brought here to behold thy beauties. For I know thee, I know thy name ; I know the names of thy forty-two deities, who are with thee in the Hall of the two Truths, feeding on the remains of sinners, and drinking their blood, on that day when an account must be rendered before Onnophris, of righteous utterance. Thy name is the God whose twin sisters are the queens of the two Truths ; now I know you, lord of the two Truths, and I bring you the Truth : I have for you destroyed sins. I have not committed any wrong against men, I have not oppressed the humble folk. I have not diverted any money in the city of the dead. I have never laid my task upon any free man over above what he wrought for himself. I have not transgressed, I have not wearied, I have not defaulted, I have not done that which is abominable in the eyes of the gods. I have not caused a slave to be ill-treated by his master. I have starved no man, I have made none to weep, I have done no murder, I have not caused any treacherous murder, and I have not committed treason against any man. I have not curtailed the provisions of the temples. I have not spoilt the shewbread of the gods. I have not removed the cakes and the winding-sheets of the dead. I have not profaned or defiled the sacred precincts of the temples. I have not sworn. I have taken nothing from the sacred revenues. I have not pressed upon the scales. I have not warped the beam of the balance. I have not snatched the milk from the mouths of sucklings ! I have not lassoed the beasts on their pasture. I have not caught in a net the birds of the gods. I have not fished for the fishes of their pools. I have not driven back the water in its season. I have not cut off a little rill on its course. I have not quenched the fire in its hour. I have not cheated the Nine Gods of the choice pieces of the victims. I have not thrust away the oxen

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. p. 188.

from the bonds of the gods. I have not repulsed the god when he came forth.—I am pure. I am pure. I am pure. I am pure. There is no crime against me in this land of Double Truth. As I know the name of the gods who are with thee in the Hall of Double Truth, save me from them!”

The dead then turns towards the jury :

“Hail to you, gods who are in the great Hall of Double Truth, who have no lie in your breasts, but who live on truth and feed your hearts thereon, before the Lord God who dwelleth in his solar disk. Deliver me from the Typhon who feedeth on entrails, O princes, in this day of final judgement—Grant to the departed that he may come to you, he who hath neither lied nor done any wrong, nor committed any crime, nor given any false witness, nor done anything against himself, but liveth on truth and feedeth on truth. He hath spread joy on every side ; what he hath done, men speak of it and the gods rejoice thereat. He hath won the god to himself by his love : he hath given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, raiment to the naked : he hath given a ship to the shipwrecked, he hath offered up sacrifices to the gods, and funeral banquets to the spirits of the dead. Save him from himself, speak not against him before the Lord of the Dead, for his mouth is pure, and his two hands are pure !”

The pleading is ended : the balance will decide. Thot watches the beam. Truth crouches on one of the scales. The heart is set on the other : if it is found light, and free from faults, Thot, lord of the holy speech, recorder of the great Nine, says to his father Osiris, master of the length of days :

“Behold the departed in this Hall of Double Truth, and his heart hath been weighed in the balance in the presence of the great Spirits, masters of Hades, and he hath been found true ; no trace of earthly impurity hath been found in his heart. Now that he cometh forth from the judgement-hall, with his words found righteous, his heart is given back to him, as also his eyes and the bodily integument of his

heart, to be put back in their places, each in his own time, his soul in heaven, his heart in the other world, as is the custom of the followers of Horus. Henceforth let his body be in the hands of Anubis, who presideth over the tombs; let him have offerings in the cemetery in the presence of Onnophris; let him be like one of those favourites who walk behind thee; let his soul establish itself in any place that he may please in the field of the dead in his city, he whose voice hath been found righteous before the great Nine."

After all that has been said, it is easy to understand why the Egyptians in all ages have attached so much importance to the correctness of their behaviour and the enumeration of their virtues. There are abundant inscriptions to prove this. Below is one of Ramses II., who had built a temple for his father at Abydos:

"The most beautiful thing to see, the best thing to hear, is a son with a grateful heart. My heart urgeth me to do what is good for my father. . . . Awake, O my father, raise thy face towards the sky, thou who art like unto God. Here am I, I who make thy name to live: I am thy keeper. . . . I have set apart revenues for thee, for thy daily worship; I pay for thee priests appointed to sprinkle the sacred water on the ground. . . . I have dedicated to thee the domains of the south for the service of thy temple."

How could the divine balance condemn the heart of so good a son? The most ancient papyri have preserved for us epitaphs deeply imbued with the same spirit. In the inscription relating to the governor Ameni, who lived under the twelfth dynasty (in the third millennium B.C.) these words occur:

"I was a master full of goodness and of a gentle disposition, a governor who loved his city. I have not afflicted the child of the poor, nor evilly entreated widows, nor dispossessed owners of land, nor driven out shepherds. I have not taken away any farmer's men for my own work. In my time was none wretched, none starved, even in the years of famine, for I had caused all the fields of my province to be ploughed and sown. Thus I provided substance for the inhabitants

thereof. None suffered hunger; I gave equally to the widow and to her that had a husband; I preferred not the great man to the lowly in all that I gave. When the floods of the Nile were great, he that had sown, the same was master of his crops. I kept nothing from the produce of the field."<sup>1</sup>

Here is the epitaph of an official, contemporary of the fourth and fifth dynasties (fourth millennium B.C.):

"He executed justice. He was a benefactor of men. He was proclaimed righteous by the elders. He never put any to death. Lord of heaven . . . it is I who bring the peace which maketh pleasant; who loved his father, and loved his mother, and was pleasant unto them that were with him. Gentle to his brothers and his sisters, beloved of his servants, he never did any harm to any man."<sup>2</sup>

In a supplication preserved in one of the oldest papyri known,<sup>3</sup> we find the following addressed to an overseer who was probably in office under the third dynasty (fourth-fifth millennium B.C.):

"O thou, guide of the unfortunate, father of the wretched, husband of the widow, father of the orphan, raiment of him that hath no mother, guide without harshness, great without meanness, who blottest out deceit and makest truth to live." . . .

Clearly, even before the Hebrew revelation, Egyptian religion had risen to a very high moral level. Its crowning development is marked by the doctrine of immortality, with virtue as its condition and requital as its object. But from the time of the appearance of Moses this religion began to decay; its moral value declined; goddesses were raised to a higher rank than gods; and magic invaded and corrupted worship. What did Egypt lack? The revelation of the Life-God. Egypt sought the way of Life, and asked it of her gods, but her gods could not answer her, and she fell back into her original corruption after carving on the pedestal of the statue of Neith the secret of her impotence:

<sup>1</sup> Brugsch, *Gesch. Aegyptens*, Leipzig, 1877, p. 129, translated by Leblois.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pleyte, *Etudes Egyptologiques*, ii. p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Berlin papyrus, No. 2.

"I am all that hath been, is, or shall be, but no mortal hath yet been able *to lift the veil which covereth me.*"<sup>1</sup>

*Section 3. Chinese Writings.*

Are there any Chinese texts extant of the time of Moses? Owing to the nature of the documents concerned we cannot speak so certainly as about the Egyptian inscriptions. Here old is mixed with new, and the whole confused by endless revisions. It seems safe, however, to assign to pre-fourteenth-century literature the following passages from the earliest sacred book of the Chinese, the *Shû King*, all belonging to dynasties of the third and second millennium B.C. As is well known, the *Shû King* has been preserved in the writings of the reformer Confucius (550-479 B.C.), who quotes and annotates it. That Confucius does not deserve the credit of raising the Chinese religion to the level attained by it in the fragments quoted below, is proved by the fact that his predecessor, Lao-Tsu, has left us a book, the *Tào-teh-King*, or *The Book of Wisdom and Virtue*, which reveals a theological culture and power of religious speculation superior to anything in Confucius himself. The latter, whom tradition has greatly overrated, represents himself as the pious compiler of the works of a remote past; and everything tends to show that he spoke the truth. Below are a few extracts from the *Shû King*. Words of King Shun (third millennium B.C.) to his ministers:

"We must deal humanely with those that come from afar, instruct those that are near, esteem and hold in honour the men of talent, believe and trust men that are virtuous and charitable, and have no dealings with those whose manners are corrupt."

"Let the children of princes and great men be sincere and affable, indulgent, accommodating and grave: teach them to be firm without being hard or cruel; give them discernment, but let them not be proud."

"The heart of man is full of stumbling-blocks: the

<sup>1</sup> Statue of Neith at Saïs. Cf. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, § 3.



heart of the Tào<sup>1</sup> is simple and secret. Be pure, be simple, and hold always to the just mean."

"Believe not a man's speech without examining it, and take not a side without careful thought."

"Must not the people be loved? Must not the people be feared? . . . What care must he not take who sitteth on the throne! We must be careful to preserve the love of virtue, and to better ourselves continually. The words which come out of the mouth do a good work sometimes: but sometimes also they give birth to wars."

"If I commit faults, you must warn me thereof: you would be to blame, if in my presence you applauded me, and removed from me you spoke differently."

Kão-Yáo, Shun's minister, says:

"In the care which he hath of his subjects, Shun showeth much moderation, and in his government the greatness of his soul shineth forth. If he must chastise, the chastisement passeth not on from father to son, but, if he must recompense, the recompense stretcheth unto children's children.<sup>2</sup> As for involuntary faults, he pardoneth them, without inquiring whether they be great or small. The faults committed wilfully, though they be of no account in appearance, are punished. As for doubtful faults, the punishment is light; but if a service, however doubtful, have been done, the reward is great. He chooseth rather to be in danger of not enforcing laws against the guilty, than put to death one that is innocent. A virtue which thus delighteth to preserve the lives of subjects, winneth the hearts of the people."

"He is a man of good who knoweth how to join reserve with indulgence, firmness with honesty, gravity with frankness, modesty with great talents, constancy with kindness, rectitude and exactness with gentleness, moderation with discernment, spirit with teachableness, and power with

<sup>1</sup>Tao has various meanings; cf. the Christian use of Logos (λόγος). It may mean, according to the context, way, reason, wisdom, word, the mind which created and sustains the universe.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Exodus* xx. 5, 6.

justice. That man is rightly called wise, who practiseth continually these nine virtues."

"When you exhort others, and put your hand to the task, to deal with business, deem that you are a pattern which must be an ensample to others."

King Yu, successor of Shun, says :

"He who obeyeth the law of reason and of nature is happy : he who breaketh it is unhappy."

"If a prince knoweth men well, he employeth none but the wise in public duties ; if he is humane and a benefactor to the people, his generous heart and his liberality make him to be loved."

Y, Yu's minister, says :

"We must watch ourselves and never cease to chasten ourselves. . . . Flee pleasant amusements, and give not yourselves to the pleasures of the senses. . . . Oppose not the things commanded by reason, to go after the praises and applause of the people. Withstand not the desires of the people to follow your own inclinations."

King Yu asserts that :

"Virtue is the foundation of good government : and this government consists firstly in providing for the people the things necessary for its existence and preservation. We must also think how to make the people virtuous. . . . Lastly we must save it from all that can hurt its health and its life."

Chung-Hui, minister of Ching-Tang, who founded the second dynasty, towards the eighteenth century B.C., says to his king :

"O King, apply yourself to give great examples of virtue ; be for the people a pattern of the just mean, which they must hold to : deal with your kingdom righteously. Rule your heart according to the laws of seemliness, then shall you bequeath a great example to posterity. I have heard say that he who knoweth how to find instructors for himself, attaineth to supreme dominion ; he who saith that others are not as good as he, cometh to ruin. He who loveth to in-

quire, increaseth his learning ; he who considereth only his own opinion, dwindleth." " Ah, to end well, we must begin well. . . . If you respect and keep the law of Tien, you will always preserve the mandate of Tien."<sup>1</sup>

Extracts from the *Shih-King*, or *Book of Songs*, the earliest hymns of which are assigned to the age of Moses.

O all ye wise men of the Earth,  
Know ye not the law of virtue ?  
He who hateth no man and coveteth nothing,  
How should he not do what is just and good ?

Oh how truly excellent is he,  
Who would not eat the bread of idleness !

Let us not yield ourselves up to excess ;  
Let us think always of the duties of our estate.  
Let us not imitate the savages in the love of pleasure ;  
The good man continueth grave and thoughtful.  
Let us not yield ourselves up to excess :  
Let us think of the future.

Let us not imitate the savages in the love of pleasure :  
The good man is always active.  
Let us not yield ourselves up to excess ;  
Let us think of the trials that may come.  
Let us not imitate the savages in the love of pleasure.  
The good man continueth calm and serene.

Fear the wrath of Tien,  
And think not thou canst give thyself up to thy passions.  
Fear the turning back of Tien,  
And think not thou canst give thyself with impunity to  
thy pleasures.

The great Tien hath understanding,  
He is with you at every step ;  
The great Tien is discerning,  
He followeth you in your behaviour and in your falls.

How great is the Shang Ti !  
The Master of men here below.

<sup>1</sup> *Tien* and *Shang-Ti* mean the Lord of Heaven, God.

How terrible is the Shang Ti!  
How are his decrees thwarted by men!  
Tien begat the multitude of peoples;  
But the moral nature which he bestowed upon them is  
not constant:  
All are good at first,  
But few remain so to the end.

Such, in its most inviting aspects, is the religion of ancient China. M. Berthoud goes too far when he says: "Confucius is the real father of independent ethics." But it is certain that the great defect of the religion which produced Confucius is that it suffered from the absence of God. The care to live correctly seems to have stifled at their birth the noble aspirations of the soul. Blind obedience to parents is the ultimate end of all virtue; their deification after death exhausts all the hopes of a life beyond. It is as if a nation of children had philosophized, matured, and grown old, without passing through the crisis of youth. What was it that China lacked, to give life and noble ideals and permanent incentives to holiness? A living and personal religion: the vision of Jehovah.

*Section. 4. Semitic Writings (Chaldaea).*

Between Chinese and Chaldaean religion there is a violent contrast. As the former is calm, poor and narrow, so the latter is in an equal degree remarkable for its discontent, its wealth and magnificent flights of imagination. Full of awe in presence of the problems of human existence, man's thoughts seek after God and are not content to be without Him. In its elements, Chaldaean theology is relatively simple. It regards the world as delivered up to maleficent demoniacal powers: all the sufferings of nature or men come from evil spirits:

"Seven, seven . . . in the depth of the abyss of waters they are seven—and destroyers of the heaven they are seven—they have grown up in the depth of the abyss;—they are neither male nor female—they are gusts that pass.—They take none to wife, they beget not offspring,—they know

neither compassion nor goodwill,—they hear neither prayer nor supplication.—Like wild horses, they are born in the mountains;—they are evil, they are evil—and they are seven, they are seven, they are twice seven. Up yonder, they howl; here, they lie in ambush; they are the great worms which the heaven hath let loose,—the mighty ones whose clamour goeth through the city; who pour the water from the heaven in torrents, the sons issued from the womb of the earth.—They twine themselves around the high rafters, the broad rafters like a crown; they journey from house to house,—for the door stoppeth them not, the bar driveth them not back, but they slip like a serpent under the door,—they steal in like the air through the cracks of the folding doors. They tear the child from a man's knees, they entice the innocent from his fruitful house,—they are the voice of threatening which pursueth him from behind.”

Their spite turns also against animals :

“They force the raven to fly away on his wings and they oblige the swallow to flee from her nest;—they put to flight the bull, they put to flight the lamb—even the evil devils which lie in ambush.”

Against the terror of the devils which haunts him, the Chaldaean invokes the succour of the gods. These are doubtless already distributed in a polytheistic hierarchy by the official religion; but, in practice, the old *Elohism* is always uppermost, and every man continues to worship his patron-god as if he were the only one whose intervention were really operative.

In one place it is Nebo :

“Thou man yet unborn, put thy trust in Nebo, and in no other god put thy confidence.”

In another it is Marduk :

“O Marduk, when thy power is revealed, who can escape therefrom? Thy word is a sovereign net which thou spreadest in the heaven and over the earth. O Lord, among the gods which bear a name, thou art supreme.”

## 130 CHARMS AGAINST EVIL SPIRITS

Elsewhere it is Gibil, lord of fire ; or Shamash, who dwells in the sun :

"Gibil, hero exalted in the land,—valiant son of the abyss, exalted in the land—Gibil, thy fire bright and dazzling—when it shineth in the darkness—assigneth a lot to everything that hath a name.—Copper and tin, it is thou who minglest them ;—gold and silver, it is thou who meltest them ;—the companion of the goddess Ninkasi, thou art he ;—he that turneth his breast against the foe that attacketh by night, thou art he also.—Bring it then to pass that man, son of his god, his limbs may shine—make him to be as bright as the heaven—to shine like the earth—to glitter like the inward parts of the heaven—and make the word of evil (and withal the evil spirits) to depart far from him."

"O Sun (Shamash), on the foundation of the heavens thou liftest up thyself—thou drawest back the bars which shut in the glittering heavens,—thou openest the gate of the heavens—O Sun, thou liftest up thy head above the earth,—O Sun, thou spreadest over the earth the shining vault of the heavens."

The spirits of darkness flee at his approach or retreat into their mysterious caves, for

"He destroyeth the wicked, he disperseth—the fatal signs and omens, dreams and evil ghouls,—he turneth evil into good, and driveth to destruction both lands and men—who give themselves up to black magic."<sup>1</sup>

To keep off the spirits, it was customary to put at the house-door an image of a god or else the caricature of a devil, so terrible that the devil was to take fright and flee at the sight of his own face. For the healing of diseases men used talismans, either necklaces engraved with the image of a god, or else a strip of cloth inscribed with some such formula as the following :

"Evil demon, malignant pest, the spirit of the earth hath caused you to come out of his body. May the favourable genius, the good giant, and the beneficent spirit come together with the spirit of the earth. Incantation of the mighty, mighty, mighty god !"

<sup>1</sup> Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. pp. 635, 656, etc.

Or else :

"May the evil demon come out ; may the demons fall one upon another. May the favourable spirit enter into his body."

Or again :

"The plague and the fever which make the country desolate, the wicked demon, the evil-doer, the evil eye, the mischievous tongue, may they come forth from his body, may they come forth from his bowels ! Never shall they enter into my body, never shall they do evil before me, never shall they enter into my house.—Spirit of heaven, remember thou it ! Spirit of earth, remember thou it !" <sup>1</sup>

The incantation-formulae, philtres and amulets invented by the superstitious terror of the Chaldaeans won them fame throughout antiquity. They were the great masters in the magic arts, not only in the East, but also in the West and in Christian lands. In the middle ages the Chaldaean formula was still used in exorcism : "Hilka, hilka, bescha, bescha ! Go away, go away, wicked, wicked !"

While their dread of demons made them thus stoop to most ridiculous practices, their faith in the deity had raised their theology and religious sense to a quite remarkable level. The Chaldaeans believed, like the Hebrews after them, that the dead dwell in a dark and sorrowful land, a land of half-dreams, where nothing wakes in the leaden memory save the remembrance of having been exiled from the earth and a yearning to go up to it again. They allowed, however, the possibility of a resurrection for any who could drink of the spring of living waters hidden under the palace of Allat, queen of the Shades. The legend of Ishtar, Queen of Love and Life, tells how a miracle of this kind was accomplished by her on behalf of the young shepherd Dumuzi. To save him she went down into hell, endured the pangs of death and stole the sacred water. But how many mortals can hope to be thus loved by the gods ? The poem of Ishtar's<sup>7</sup> descent

<sup>1</sup> Seignobos, *op. cit.* p. 185.

into hell possesses great literary beauty; below is a fragment of it:

"Towards the land whence no man returneth, towards the land that thou knowest,—Ishtar, daughter of Sin, hath turned her thoughts:—she, the daughter of Sin, hath turned her thought—towards the house of darkness, the abode of Irkalla,—towards the house which if a man enter, he cometh not forth again,—towards the path which if a man tread, he returneth not again,—towards the house which if a man enter, he renounceth the light;—the place where men feed upon dust, where men feed upon clay,—see not the light, but dwell in darkness;—put on, as do the birds, a raiment of wings;—where the dust is heaped up on the door and on the bolt." . . .

She arrives at the porch, and knocks, and addresses the warder in imperious tones:

"Warder of the waters, open thy door—open thy door, that I may enter in, even I—If thou open not thy door and I enter not in, even I,—I shall cleave the door, I shall break the bars,—I shall cleave the threshold, I shall burst the panels,—I shall raise the dead, that they eat up the living, and the dead shall be more in number than the quick."

The warder opened his mouth, spoke and commanded the mighty Ishtar:

"Stay thy hand, Lady, and overthrow not the door—let me go and announce thy name to the queen Allat." Allat at first hesitates, then allows him to receive the goddess: "Go, warder, open the door to her—but deal with her according to the laws of old." . . .<sup>1</sup>

At times, the religious speculation of the Chaldaeans burst the bars of Allat's prison and told how the gods in their heaven welcomed without much ado the souls purified by a holy life or heroic acts. Men dreamed of that abode of Life, and were even tempted at times to find the road to it and force an entry before death had sounded the hour of departure. Thus did Etana, taking the eagle of Shamash

<sup>1</sup>Jeremias, *Die Hoellenfahrt der Ishtar*, 1889, and Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. p. 693.



as his accomplice. This legend gives a notion of the general development reached by the ancient Chaldaeans. Here are its principal fragments :<sup>1</sup>

“ ‘ Friend,’ said the eagle to him, ‘ let thy look be calm !  
Come, let me carry thee to the heaven of Anu.  
Against my breast lay thy breast,  
Upon the ends of my wings lay thy two hands,  
Against my flank press thy flank.’  
—Against the eagle’s breast he put his breast,  
Upon the ends of his wings he laid his two hands,  
Against his flank he pressed his flank ;  
He established himself firmly, and his weight was great.”

Chaldaean artists had more than once pictured the hero’s departure. They showed him clasped to his ally in a tight embrace. The first spring lifts them from the earth, and shepherds scattered over the fields are seen gazing in amazement at this unaccustomed spectacle ; one of them points out the marvel to another, and their dogs, crouching at their feet, stretch out their necks as if howling with terror :

“ For the space of a double hour the eagle bore him,  
Then the eagle spake to him, to him, even Etana :  
‘ Behold, friend, the earth as it is,  
And the sea which Ocean girdleth.  
See, the earth is no more than a mountain,  
And the sea is now only a pool.’

The space of a second double hour he bore him,  
Then the eagle spake to him, to him, even Etana :  
‘ Behold, friend, the earth, what manner of thing it is :  
The sea seemeth as it were the girdle of the earth.’

The space of a third double hour he bore him,  
Then the eagle spake to him, to him, even Etana ;  
‘ Behold, friend, the earth, what manner of thing it is :  
The sea is now no more than a channel which a gardener  
maketh.’ ”

They thus come to the heaven of Anu, and they rest there a moment. Etana now sees nothing around him but

<sup>1</sup> Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. p. 699.

empty space, and nothing to give it life, not even a bird ; he is frightened, but the eagle reassures him and tells him to resume his journey to the heaven of Ishtar.

“ ‘Come, friend, let me carry thee to Ishtar.  
And near Ishtar, the lady Ishtar, I will set thee,  
And at the feet of Ishtar, the lady Ishtar, thou shalt  
throw thyself.  
Against my flank press thy flank,  
Upon the ends of my wings lay thy hands.’ ”

The space of a double hour he bore him :  
‘Friend, behold the earth, what manner of thing it is.  
The face of the earth is spread out, quite flat,  
And the sea is no larger than a little pool.’

The space of a second double hour he bore him :  
‘Friend, behold the earth, what manner of thing it is,  
The earth is now no more than a square in a garden,  
And the wide sea is no larger than a splash of water.’ ”

At the third double hour, Etana lost heart, and cried “Halt !” and the eagle came down again immediately ; but, worn out, he released his hold and was broken to pieces on the ground.

Tales like this could not enlighten the devout on the realities of the world beyond the grave, but they inculcated a deep reverence for the gods, who do not allow any attempt to scale their kingdom to go unpunished. This reverence shows itself in a crowd of invocations and prayers, notably in this one addressed to Nannar, the *Elohim* of Ur, Abraham’s native town :

“Lord, prince of the gods, who in heaven and on earth art alone exalted,—father Nannar, Lord of Ur, prince of the Gods, . . . —Lord, thy godhead filleth the ends of the sky, like a vast sea, with fear and awe.—Master of the earth, thou who ordainest the bounds of cities and assignest them their names ;—father, begetter of gods and men, who stablishest dwelling-places for them and foundest for them that which is good,—who proclaimest their kingdom and givest the exalted sceptre to those whose destiny is fixed

since the days long-past ;—mighty Chief, whose love is wide, god whom none can name, whose limbs are firm and whose knees never bow, who openest the ways of the gods thy brethren. . . . —In heaven, who is supreme? Thou, thou only art supreme.—Thou, whose decree is made known in heaven, and the angels bow their faces.—Thou, whose decree is made known upon earth, and the spirits of the abyss kiss the ground.—Thou, whose decree breatheth above like the wind, and the stubble and the pasture become fertile.—Thou, whose decree is fulfilled on the earth below, and the grass and all green things grow.—Thou, whose decree is seen in the parks of herds and in the lairs of beasts, and it multiplieth all living things.—Thou, whose decree hath called forth right and justice, and the peoples have published thy statutes.—Thou, whose decree, neither in the ends of the heaven, nor in the hidden depths of the earth, can any man know.—Thy decree who can learn, who can oppose it? O Lord, in mightiness in the heaven, in sovereignty on the earth, among the gods thy brethren, thou hast not any rival.”

The keen sense of God's power, so grandly expressed in the psalm just quoted, was naturally accompanied by a sense of human frailty, of the dependence of the worshipper on his god, and of the responsibility incurred every time that a fault, even though it were involuntary, happened to offend the searching eye of the Almighty. The Chaldaean conscience was sensitive: the consciousness of sin haunted them, and if they thought they had failed in anything, their repentance was expressed in prayers of pathetic humility:

“O Lord, my sins are many, my misdeeds are great.—O my goddess, my sins are many, and great my transgressions.—I have done wrong and know it not; I have committed sin and know it not; I have fed upon misdeeds and know them not;—I have walked in shortcomings and know them not.—The Lord, in the wrath of his heart he hath struck me; the god, in the resentment of his heart, he hath forsaken me; Ishtar hath waxed wroth against me and hath dealt with me harshly—I strive and no man stretcheth out a hand toward me,—I weep and none cometh near me,—I cry aloud and none heareth;—I am overcome with

grief, I am overpowered, I can no more lift up my head toward my merciful god, I turn about to call upon him, and I groan— . . . Lord, reject not thy servant,—and if he hath thrown himself into impetuous waters, stretch out a hand toward him ;—the sins I have committed, have mercy on them,—the misdeeds I have done, scatter them to the winds,—and my manifold faults, rend them like a garment!”<sup>1</sup>

“O God, my Creator, lay hold on my arms, Direct the breath of my mouth, direct my hands, O Lord of light!” . . .<sup>2</sup>

We can recognize in these accents the spiritual ardour and depth and the religious attitude of the race which was destined one day to give the world the Psalmists and the Prophets, and readily understand why God, wishing to reveal to men His word and His mercy, chose His elect on Chaldaean soil. The race of Abraham was predestined to understand and to spread the religion of Jehovah.

#### *Section. 5 Aryan Writings.*

Strangely enough, though the Semitic race was to give to the world the most perfect form of religion, the control of the world's destinies was in other hands. As the Semites had, in the far distant past, entered upon the inheritance of the Hamites, on the banks of the Tigris, the Euphrates and possibly the Nile, a new race, which, till the time of Moses, had lived retired on the furthest table-lands of Asia, now prepared to come down into better regions and to establish itself in the temperate zones of India, Iran, Asia Minor and Europe. Intelligent and enterprising as it was, this race in no long time spread over the civilization of the Semites, absorbed it and finally made good its claim to control the course of history. The Aryans—called by tradition the descendants of Japheth—scarcely appear on the scene until the fourteenth century B.C., to which period belong their great migratory movements down the Indus, the Ganges and the Oxus. Those who invaded the south and are known as

<sup>1</sup> E. Schrader, *Die Hoellenfahrt der Ishtar*, 1874, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> F. Lenormant, *Etudes accadiennes*, vol. iii pp. 148-152, and Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. p. 682.

Hindus, brought with them the hymns of their primitive religion, and these hymns, collected in the Vedas, show us that originally the Aryans, like the Hamites and the Semites, had local or tribal gods, and that each of these patron-gods or Elohim, such as Indra, Varuna, Agni, Mithra, etc., was exalted by his family of worshippers, as if he had been the principal god, the only Almighty. Hence the impossibility of constructing a coherent and homogeneous polytheism from the songs of the earliest of the Vedas, the *Rig-Veda*. On the other hand, these songs exhibit an already well-developed religious sense in these primitive Aryans. At times the patron-gods are invoked with childish simplicity:<sup>1</sup>

“O Indra, if, like Thee, I were the sole master of wealth. I would wish my singer to be surrounded with cows.”

Elsewhere, on the contrary, the style is that of an epic. Thus, in this hymn to Indra :

1. “He groweth, he exalteth himself for the heroic work ; peerless, everlastingly young, he possesseth treasures.

Indra stretcheth further than heaven and earth ; one half of him is equal to the two worlds together.

2. Wherefore also I worship his infinite power ; what he hath stablished, none may destroy it.

Day by day, the sun hath shown himself. He hath, in his goodness, opened unto us spacious dwelling-places.

3. To-day, as yesterday, the task of the rivers is what it was, O Indra, when thou first sentest them forth.

The mountains have sat them down like guests at a feast, and by thee, wise God, the vast spaces have been established.

4. Yea, it is the truth, there is no god like unto thee, O Indra, no mortal greater.

Thou hast struck the serpent that lay around the rain-clouds, thou hast caused the waters to flow towards the sea.

5. It is thou, Indra, who hast opened wide the gates of the rain, who hast broken the fastnesses of the mountain.

Thou hast approved thyself king of nature and of men, creating at once the sun, the heaven and the dawn.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rig-Veda*, transl. Langlois, vi. 14. At that epoch of pastoral life cows were the chief element of wealth.

<sup>2</sup> *Rig-Veda*, tr. Barth, in Leblois, *op. cit.* p. 142.

Among the most sublime flights of Vedic piety, we may quote the following hymns and prayers addressed to the god Varuna :

1. " In honour of the illustrious, the royal Varuna, celebrate the great sacrifice, with all the pomp that may please him; for as the sacrificer spreadeth out the skin of the victim, even so Varuna hath spread before the sun the divine habitable earth.

2. He hath given air to the branches of the forests, strength to the horses, milk to the cows. He hath set a soul in our bodies, fire in the midst of the rain-clouds, the sun in the heaven, the soma plant on the hills.

3. Varuna hath created this mighty body which seemeth to be crushed beneath its weight, and the heaven and the earth, and the air. As the rain moisteneth a barley field, even so Varuna, king of the world, watereth the whole earth.

4. Varuna watereth the earth, the air and the heaven, and when he hath need of the heavenly milk, the clouds stretch afar their dark mass which the gods of the tempest drive with force.

5. I sing the great might of the renowned Varuna, joined to the spirit which giveth life. Set in the midst of the air, he useth the sun as a measure to measure the earth withal.

6. No man could destroy this great might of a God full of wisdom, for he is like unto a boundless sea which all the shining torrents cannot fill with their streams.

7. O Varuna, thou art towards us both *Aryaman* and *Mithra*,<sup>1</sup> thou art our friend, our brother, thou art as it were a fellow-man come down to us. If we have committed some fault, O Varuna, deign to blot it out.

8. If wicked men, as in a cruel game, have conceived some evil design, if there is any unjust plot which we knew not of, O divine Varuna, deliver us from these conspiracies, let them be found out ! May we ever be in thy faithful keeping !"

1. " He is born for strength and greatness, Varuna who hath founded the boundless realms of heaven and earth. It

<sup>1</sup>i.e. *Great Ancestor and Friend*.

is he who on the one hand hath stretched the great and wide vault, spangled o'er with stars, and, on the other, hath stretched out the expanse of the earth.

2. I said within myself: 'All things are blended together in Varuna.'<sup>1</sup> May he be merciful and may he accept my burnt-offering. Pious and reverent, may I feel the gentleness of Varuna.

3. O Varuna, being now blind, I ask whence cometh evil and I turn to the wise for an answer. All the wise men have said to me: 'Varuna is wroth against thee.'

4. O Varuna, what sin have I done so great that thou shouldst desire to strike a singer, thy friend? Invincible and mighty God, tell me! Innocent and zealous, I wish to worship thee.

5. O King, forgive our fathers' iniquity; forgive also that whereof we ourselves have been guilty. Deliver from the bonds of darkness the friend of living creatures; deliver him like a thief whose fetters are broken, like a calf whose chain is cut asunder.

6. O Varuna, thy strength is not the strength that cometh of drunkenness or of wrath burning for destruction, or of stupid ignorance. . . . The elder brother is ever inclined to succour his younger brother."

1. "The great Lord of the worlds seeth, as if he were hard by. Think not to walk in secret: the gods know all your footsteps.

2. Whether a man walk, or abide unmoved, or hide himself, whether he rise up or lie down, King Varuna knoweth it. He knoweth what two men sitting close together whisper in the ear; he is there between them twain.

3. This earth also belongeth unto Varuna, as well as the vast heaven and the furthest ends thereof. The two seas, even the heaven and the ocean, are the flanks of Varuna. He is found also in the drop of water.

4. If a man flee afar and even beyond the heavens, he cannot escape from Varuna our king. His messengers come

<sup>1</sup> A hint of the coming Pantheism which eventually corrupted the whole of Hindu theology.

down from heaven to earth. With his thousands of eyes, he watcheth the world.

5. King Varuna seeth all things between heaven and earth, and all that is beyond. He counteth the twinklings of men's eyes. Everything is plain before him, as the dice before the gambler.

6. May thine outspread nets, threefold and sevenfold, catch the man who speaketh a lie ; may they spare him who useth to speak the truth."<sup>1</sup>

We seem almost to have reached the theology of a single personal god : but no sooner has this marvellous and deceptive literature risen thus far, than it falters and sinks back into an inextricable tangle of subtle symbols, in which a crowd of nature-deities dimly appear behind the rising and thickening fog of Pantheism. Among the most beautiful hymns must be ranked those inspired by the agony of a thought shrouded and permeated by darkness, no longer able to understand even itself. Thus the *Song of Creation* :

"There was as yet neither being nor not-being ;

The ocean of air was not,

Neither the heavenly path above our heads.

What then was wrapping it around ?

Where were the secret things hidden ?

Was it the waters which formed the unfathomable abyss ?

There was neither death nor anything immortal,

Nothing to divide the night from the day ;

The One-Being breathed without breath,

Shut in within himself.

. . . . .

Seeds were sown, young shoots appeared :

Beneath was nature,

Above, strength and will.

Who then knoweth, who hath ever declared,

Whence cometh out the vast creation ?

The gods arose after the creation ;

Who shall say from whence they came ?

<sup>1</sup> This hymn is recorded by the *Atharva-Veda*, but it belongs by its character to the early Vedic period.



He alone, from whence it proceedeth, even the vast creation,  
 Whether he have produced it or not,  
 He, who looketh down from the height of heaven,  
 He alone knoweth it—or can it be that He who knoweth it  
 not?"<sup>1</sup>

After such an avowal, we cannot be surprised that in another hymn, in which the poet dreams of a "Golden Germ" giving birth to all that exists, every stanza concludes with the persistent refrain, breathing disillusionment and anxious questioning :

"To what God,  
 To what God shall we bring our burnt offering?"

To what God? It seems that the solution of this problem was once the chief pre-occupation of the Aryan family, which spread to the West, on the great table-land of Iran, from the Indus to the Euphrates and to the Caspian Sea. This family is known especially under the name of *Persians*, and their monotheistic speculations are expressed in the oldest parts of the *Avesta*, called the *Gâthâs*, or Psalms of Zoroaster.<sup>2</sup> The reasons put forward by some modern critics for lowering the antiquity of the *Gâthâs*, and casting doubt upon the existence of Zoroaster are quite inadequate.<sup>3</sup> Others put back Zoroaster's date to the third millennium B.C.<sup>4</sup> The safest and best authenticated solution seems to us to be that which, while allowing the date of

<sup>1</sup> *Rig-Veda*, x. 129. Cf. Max Müller, *Essays*, i. 73.

<sup>2</sup> The *Avesta* or *Zend-Avesta* is the sacred book of the Persians, worshippers of *Ahura-Mazda* (Ormuz). Tradition says that the original of this immense work was written in letters of gold on 12,000 ox-hides, and was burnt by Alexander the Great in the burning of Persepolis. Only a small fragment of the early *Avesta* is extant.

The *Gâthâs*, consisting of five groups of psalms, are incorporated in the second of the three books which constitute the present *Avesta*. The text of the *Gâthâs* bears evidence of revision, and exists only in an edition where everything has been adapted to the necessities of a liturgy removed by a great length of time from their original composition.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, 3 vols., 1892-3.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, 1884.

the *Avesta* as a whole to be fairly recent (eighth to second century B.C.) admits, with the best authorities on the Vedas,<sup>1</sup> that the Gâthâs are, together with the *Rig-Veda*, one of the most ancient monuments of the Aryan race; that they were inspired by a reaction against the nature-cult of the Vedas, and that Zoroastrianism marks the religious revolution which divides the Aryans of the East into two irreconcilable families. This schism was followed by migrations in different directions. While the Hindus, under the guidance of their Vedic bards, carried with them to the Ganges a polytheism already verging on pantheism, the Persians, led by their great prophet-lawgiver Zarathustra (Zoroaster), went to the north of the plateau of Iran and founded in Bactriana a monotheistic religion, the finest religion produced by unaided human effort, that of Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd).

There is no revelation in the ancient and historical parts of the Gâthâs. Zarathustra there appears as a religious genius rising by his own effort to the conception of a single God, to the conviction that this God is no other than the holy and good Spirit giving life and happiness to the whole creation, viz. *Ahura-Mazda*, the *Omniscient Lord*. Through the malice of his enemy, *Angro-Mainyus* (Ahriman), evil prevailed in the world. But Zarathustra, like the ardent patriot that he was, would not let his people be the prey of the demon. He felt a call to bring men back to the true faith and a good life, and he devoted his powers and his life to preaching of Ahura, the One and Glorious God. In the fragments of his Psalms, quoted below, we see him as a heroic reformer seeking out truth, passionately interested in the lot of his fellow-creatures, and imploring Ahura to enlighten him, and mankind to acknowledge him as the herald of good tidings. His fate is matter for conjecture. But his religion, we know, moulded a nation whose moral worth was the marvel of the ancient world; whose power secured the first successes of the Aryans over the Semites, and whose meeting with Israel "by the waters of Babylon"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, 1892, p. 544. *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (1893), p. 185, etc.

revealed so close an affinity between the religious conceptions of the two nations that the Hebrew Prophets did not hesitate to call Cyrus "the shepherd of Jehovah," and that Cyrus himself, touched by the misfortunes of this little people with beliefs so like his own, immediately broke the chains of the Jewish exiles, and thus, unwittingly, saved the cradle of Christianity.

To understand the religious import of the following pages, it is only necessary to remember that at this primitive period of *Mazdeism*, as yet free from any alloy, the Vedic deities have disappeared. The whole religion is expressed in a tragic dualism. On the one hand there is *Ahura-Mazda*, creator and benefactor of mankind, having around him, as incarnations of his good providence, six immortal spirits: *Vohu-Manô*, the spirit of goodwill; *Asha-Vahista*, the spirit of piety; *Khshathra-Vairya*, the spirit of power; *Spenta-Armaiti*, the spirit of wisdom; *Haurvatât* and *Ameretât*, spirits of prosperity and health. On the other hand, determined to destroy the life and happiness which Ahura freely bestows upon his creatures, we find the demon *Angro-Mainyus* and his abettors, the *Daevas*, the *Drûg*, *Akem-Manô*, the *Kavis*, the *Karapans*, etc., in other words, the spirits of evil.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE PSALMS OF ZARATHUSTRA.

*Zarathustra sets forth his faith and questions Ahura-Mazda.*<sup>1</sup>

"It was by thy thought that in the beginning, O Mazda, thou fashionedst us and the world, and religion, and men's understandings, and puttest life in the body and createdst thy works and doctrine; and by it also thou plantedst the desire of them in them that aspire thereunto.

The Being of falsehood and the Being of truth, He who knoweth and He who knoweth not, raise their voices to lure the hearts and thoughts of men. But where Armaiti dwelleth, there is the divine Spirit consulted.

The works done in the noonday and those done in secret, O Mazda, and the great faults committed to escape the

<sup>1</sup> Gâthâ Ahunavaiti, *Psalm* iv. Tr. Darmesteter, *op. cit.* i. p. 230.

chastisement of a little one, both these and those, all together, thou watchest them, thou seest them all with thine eyes.

I ask thee, O Ahura, what cometh and what will come; what is the debt which shall be paid for the gifts made to the just, and what, O Mazda, for the gifts made to the wicked, in the hour when it shall be paid?

And I ask thee how it will be with him in whose dwelling reigneth the wise god, who is not envious when good increaseth in the land, who is like unto thee, O Mazda-Ahura, in his acts?

Whether of the twain hath the stronger faith, the righteous or the wicked? Let not him that knoweth speak to him that knoweth not, lest the ignorant man deceive him. Teach us, O Ahura-Mazda, to know the signs of Vohu-Manô.

Out of the mouth of the wicked let none of you hear the Law and its teachings. He would bring upon the house, the village, the region round about and the whole land, misery and death. Beat him with the sword!

But hearken unto him that hath the notion of good and that knoweth thee, O Ahura, in the two worlds; him who can speak the truth and whose tongue is free. With thy red-hot iron, O Mazda, decide between the two adversaries.

Whosoever hath deceived the righteous, to him later shall be groanings, long tarrying in the darkness, noisome food, and words of insult. That is the world, O ye wicked men, whereunto your works and your religion lead you.

Mazda-Ahura hath given the fulness of Haurvatât and Ameretât and Asha, and the sovereignty of Khshathra, and the abundance of Vohu-Manô, to him who is his friend in act and thought.

The good king is he who practiseth good in his thoughts, words and deeds, in obedience to the teaching of the wise, and it is he, O Ahura, who of all beings embodieth thee the best."

*Zarathustra is moved to jealousy for Ahura, seeing the evil influence of perverse men who destroy life.*<sup>1</sup>

"It is the good Spenta-Armaïti whom we love: May she be within us! But ye, Daevas, ye are the brood of Akem-

<sup>1</sup> Gâthâ Ahunavaiti, Psalm v. Tr. Darmesteter, *op. cit.* i. p. 236.

Manô ; and he who sacrificeth unto you, belongeth greatly to the Drûg and to Pride, and behind him marcheth Error, which maketh the holy word to cease over the seven regions of the earth.

For ye lead the spirit astray in the two worlds and ye pervert men ; wherefore men begin to say the things that please the Daevas, they fall away from Vohu-Manô, and lose the understanding of Ahura-Mazda and of holiness.

Ye deceive men concerning the happiness of life and immortality, when the evil spirit, with your evil thoughts, O demons, with your evil deeds and words, giveth power unto the wicked.

Those sinners know not the notable chastisement which they draw upon themselves by their doctrines.

The word of the evil master destroyeth by his teaching the understanding of the living.

They take away from me the goods of fortune which yet are a thing to be desired when they belong to Vohu-Manô. It is for these words of my thought that I weep towards you, O Mazda and Asha.

That man killeth my words, whosoever casteth the evil eye and the spell on the ox and on the sun : likewise also he who ravageth the country, and he who insulteth the righteous.

They also kill me, those wicked men who seek their livelihood in the abuse of strength : he who spoileth the mistress and master of the house of their goods ; and those who rob Vohu-Manô ; and those who go on their way wounding men and crying out that it is the finest of deeds ; those men Mazda curseth ; and those who massacre animals out of lightness of heart, and the Karapan who chooseth money rather than right and seeketh power, to do wrong ;

And those also who desire power to turn it to money, haunted by the vilest thoughts, and those destroyers of this world who desire only groanings, O Mazda, and who prevent the apostle of thy word from teaching the Good.

He who selleth power for money hath delivered up his understanding to the Kavis ; also the deceitful judge who succoureth the wicked, and he who, while commanding the

ox's throat to be cut, mocketh and saith that butchery is the succour that wardeth off death.

Since they are not converted, the deaf and the blind shall be annihilated ; likewise also those, who, having full power, do not give life. . . . But thine own shall be carried by the two angels to the abode of Vohu-Manô.

The most excellent of all things is the virtuous teaching given with understanding by the man, O Mazda-Ahura, who is able to clear away my doubts ; for to the wicked shall come suffering and the reward which he deserveth to him who desireth to proclaim the law."

*Zarathustra implores Ahura for a revelation of the truth and for strength to proclaim it.*<sup>1</sup>

"Two things there are which I desire of thee, O Ahura Mazda : to see thee and to hold converse with thee.

I come to thee: let thy mouth, O Mazda, teach me excellent things ; the things which the very pure proclaim by Asha and Vohu-Manô.

Show us the gifts which our prayers crave.

Teach me thy law, that I may walk in Vohu-Manô, and the sacrifice, O Mazda, due to a God like thee, and the words of praise due to thee, O Asha. Give me the strength of Ameretât and the food of Haurvatât.

All the goods of the world, past, present or to come, O Mazda, may it please thee to give us. May I also grow in good thoughts, in power, in holiness and in strength.

Deliver me, O Ahura. O Armaïti, give me strength. O most beneficent spirit, Mazda, may I virtuously by Asha lay hold of triumphant strength, and of the mastery by Vohu-Manô. Grant me that I may, by the strength which is yours, cause, at will, joy among men.

Zarathustra, for his part, giveth his soul. He giveth to Mazda the guidance of his thought in the path of good ; to Asha the guidance of his acts, and to Khshathra obedience to his word."

<sup>1</sup> Gâthâ Ahunavaiti, *Psalm* vi. Tr. Darmesteter, *op. cit.* i. p. 246.

*Prayer of Zarathustra asking Ahura to give him, the Apostle of Good and Life, the message which he must deliver to the world.*<sup>1</sup>

“By what works, O Mazda, shall I bring it to pass that my power be thine?

If it be true that the other world existeth, O Mazda, give me a sign that I may live fully in that world, that I may attain to it by offering thee sacrifice and singing thy glory.

Those who, knowing, O Mazda, that Spenta-Armaiti is thy beloved, give themselves up to sin, because they possess not Vohu-Manô, those are as far from Virtue as the beasts of the field.

How ordainest thou, and what desirest thou in praise and in sacrifice? Proclaim it, O Mazda, that I may hear it, that I may know how thou orderest the laws of good. Teach us the holy paths which are those of Vohu-Manô. Tell it me, O Ahura, that path of Vohu-Manô where the conscience of the Saints, following their good deeds, goeth about to taste the joys of its holiness, the reward that thou proclaimest to the Wise, the reward that thou, O Mazda, knowest how to give.

Give, O Mazda, the desired reward to the Incarnate Life and to the deeds of Virtue. Give them thy perfect knowledge, O Ahura, the knowledge of an understanding which causeth the work of Good to grow.

O Mazda, tell me the excellent words and works, that, by the Good Thought and the Holiness of the believer who payeth his debt of praise to thee, thou mayest, O Ahura, in thy might, reveal, when it shall please thee, the world of the resurrection.”

*Zarathustra implores Ahura to reveal the truth to him. He wishes to announce it to others, but does not know it himself.*<sup>2</sup>

“I have one thing to ask thee: tell me the truth, Ahura. Grant my prayer, even as I grant thine.

<sup>1</sup>Gâthâ Ahunavaiti, *Psalm* vii. Tr. Darmesteter, *op. cit.* i. p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>Gâthâ Ushtavaiti, *Psalm* ii. Tr. Darmesteter, *op. cit.* i. p. 287.

## 148 "TELL ME THE TRUTH, AHURA"

O Mazda, I wish to be like thee, and to teach my friends to be like thee, in order to give thee pious and friendly succour, and to meet Vohu-Manô.

I have one thing to ask thee : tell me the truth, Ahura.

What is the first of things in the world of Good? The good which crowneth the desire of him who seeketh after it? For he who is thy friend, O Mazda, turneth ever evil to good and reigneth in the spirit in both worlds.

I have one thing to ask thee : tell me the truth, Ahura.

Who was the begetter, the first father of Asha? Who traced out a path for the sun and the stars? Who maketh the moon to wax and wane? These things, and more besides, I would know, O Mazda.

Who, without supports, held the earth without falling? Who made the waters and the plants? Who sent on their way the winds and clouds? Who is the creator of Vohu-Manô, O Mazda?

I have one thing to ask thee : tell me the truth, Ahura.

What good artist made the light and the darkness? What good artist made sleep and waking? Who made the dawn, noon and night? Who bringeth to view the arbitrament of justice?

I have one thing to ask thee : tell me the truth, Ahura.

Tell me what I must say to make clear this truth, that by the works of Asha, Armaïti is strengthened, and that Vohu-Manô giveth the kingdom to thine.

I have one thing to ask thee : tell me the truth, Ahura.

Who created with Khshathra the aspiration of perfect piety? Who planted love in the father's heart, when he getteth him a son? With these creatures I wish with all my might to help thee, O Mazda, O beneficent Spirit, creator of all things.

I have one thing to ask thee : tell me the truth, Ahura.

Tell me five times thy doctrine, O Mazda ; and the words revealed by Vohu-Manô in converse ; and how one may know perfectly in the world what is right ; and how my soul will be able to go and find joy in both worlds.

I have one thing to ask thee : tell me the truth, Ahura.

Show me Religion, which is of all things that are the most



excellent, and which by holiness will make the worlds prosper that follow after it.

Of the men with whom I commune, which is good, which evil? This one, or such another, is he evil? As for the wicked man who grudgeth me thy benefits, why cannot I know his spite from his gait?

I have one thing to ask thee: tell me the truth, Ahura.

When shall we drive away, when shall we drive away the Drûg? and the unteachable ones who rebel or who teach the right without practising it and who love not the converse of Vohu-Manô?

I have one thing to ask thee: tell me the truth, Ahura.

When shall I deliver up the Drûg into the hands of Truth, to destroy her with the words of thy teaching, to strike with destruction, O Mazda, the wicked who turn not back from their error and who seek to destroy Truth?

When shall I behold the hour, O Mazda, when thy work shall be accomplished?"

*Misunderstood, persecuted, deserted, Zarathustra pours out his complaint before Ahura.<sup>1</sup>*

"To what land shall I turn? Whither shall I go and address my prayer? Parents and servants desert me: neither my neighbours wish me well, nor the wicked tyrants of the land. How shall I be able to satisfy thee, O Mazda Ahura?

I see myself powerless, O Mazda: I see myself poor in flocks and poor in men. Towards thee I turn and weep. Cast thy eyes upon me, O Ahura. I await from thee the happiness which friend giveth to friend.

When shall they come who will labour for the renewal of the world? When shall the understandings of the Saints arise to support the world of Right by their works and by their teaching? As for me, O Lord, it is thy teaching that I desire.

Who is my protector, O Mazda, against the hour when the wicked man encompasseth me with his hate? Reveal unto me then the Religion which must be our rule."

<sup>1</sup> Gâthâ Ushtavaiti, *Psalm* vi. Tr. Darmesteter, *op. cit.* p. 301.

*In the midst of his sufferings, discouraged and tormented, Zarathustra implores Ahura to enlighten him, to succour him, to take him to himself in his glory.*<sup>1</sup>

“O Ahura, thou who knowest it, tell me, before I die, how by my deeds the wicked man can be brought low? . . .

What goods givest thou, O Mazda, to good kingship?

What is thy reward, O Ahura, for them who follow me? And what gifts, O Asha, may I await from thee, if I cleave unto the works of Vohu-Manô?

Let me know when cometh the hour of thy universal kingdom; the hour, O Mazda and Asha, wherein all my doubts shall be dispelled; wherein I shall be able honourably to perform the task of my virtuous destruction of the wicked, through Vohu-Manô. Let the apostle of the Law know how he shall attain to purity.

When cometh the hour, O Mazda, when men shall receive the words of my disciples?

Let him who afflicteth me become good; or else, where shall I find by Vohu-Manô the means of making him perish?

He who thus maketh my soul sick, is the perverse and faithless judge, whom justice offendeth and who refuseth to do it.

As for us, our heart's desire, O Mazda, is felicity for the beneficent judge. I disown all friendship with the wicked.

Those whose wicked minds and tongues stir up anger and brutality, who render not good works to them that do good works, who take pleasure in wrongdoing and not in good, those I say are Daevas, teachers of the religion of the Evil one.

Hearken unto me, O Mazda. Say, who is he who shall come to me like a disciple, like a parent, like a supporter and imitator?

What shall be done to Zarathustra who imploreth thy help, O Asha? To me, who bless thee in my hymns, O Ahura Mazda, imploring from thee that which is thy highest boon?

<sup>1</sup>Gâthâ Spenta Mainyu, *Psalms* ii. iii. iv. Cf. the translation by Harlez, *Avesta*, 1881, p. 356.

I have lived an honest life, in holiness, doing good : make room for me then and give me thy gifts in the other world. . . .

Show us thine almighty protection, and let it guide us to glorious felicity. . . .

I, who speak for thee, O Mazda, I, the friend of spotless piety . . . all of you, valiant and worshipful spirits, I arm myself with your prayer to go to the redoubtable Crossing.<sup>1</sup> O Mazda, Asha, Vohu-Manô, guide me so far, and come to my aid ! ”

Thus spoke Zarathustra. The *Mazdeism* which he founded was never again voiced as it had been by him ; he had no successor. His worship, in spite of all its glories, proves by its slow but sure decay, that where God has not manifested Himself in an objective revelation, there is no religion possible. Man contributes his quota, then falls back upon himself, his high aspirations cheated, and his lower cravings triumphant. Natural religions, lacking the vital impulse, spring from a national founder only to degenerate into cults which disperse and waste his religious legacy.<sup>2</sup> However, the perusal of these passages, selected like shining pearls in the midst of a literature still very full of obscurities, appears to make these conclusions abundantly clear. The first is that Zarathustra really existed and was among the inspired singers in primitive religions the greatest in character and the one gifted with the highest intuition in all that concerns the nature of God and the destiny of man. The second is that in all these pages, giving us in most sublime language the religious testament of the great civilizations of the East, there is no clear ray of revelation. God, perceptible everywhere to the heart that seeks after Him, never shows Himself sufficiently for His worshipper to be sure of His presence and triumphant in his adoration. On the contrary, his agony increases in proportion as religion, in its evolution, makes its laws more felt by the conscience and draws nearer to its object. The third conclusion is that,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* the Bridge *Cinvat*, leading either to heaven or to hell.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Westphal, *La religion et la révélation*, Montauban, 1897.

in the slow process of the ages, religious man had succeeded in the last centuries of the second millennium B.C. in making his own all that it was open to him to discover by his own effort about God, man, and the bonds which should unite them.<sup>1</sup> Man in his sinful soul, as in his thorn-infested fields, had cleared the ground and driven the furrows "in the sweat of his face." All was ready to receive the divine seed. This seed he was to obtain through the sons of Abraham, and the sower was Moses.

<sup>1</sup> In proportion as human intelligence has grown, the number of deities has diminished. The child's mind is incapable of classification; it individualizes. So with the mind of the human race. In its development the world has advanced towards monotheism. In the course of this growth, it has successively dismissed its personal, domestic, tribal, and national gods, and has step by step discovered the only God, embracing all the minor gods (many *Eloah* combining to form the notion of *Elohim*), arriving finally at the highest conception expressed by St. Paul in the words "all things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things and in him all things consist." Cf. Rexford, at the Religious Congress of Chicago, 1893. [*N.B.*—It seems uncertain whether *Elohim* be the plural of *Eloah*.]

## CHAPTER I.

### MOSES.

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF MOSES—EXOD. I. 11. THE CALL—EXOD. III. IV. 18; VI. 2-8. MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH—EXOD. VII.-XIII. THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA (PROPHETIC TRADITION)—EXOD. XIV. 5-7, 11-14, 19-20, 21<sup>b</sup>, 24-25, 27, 30-31. THE MARCH TO SINAI—EXOD. XV. 22-XIX. AT SINAI: (1) The Decalogue—DEUT. V., EXOD. XX.; (2) The Law of Love—DEUT. VI. 5, LEV. XIX. 18; (3) Feasts and Sacrifices—EXOD. XXXIV.; (4) Humanitarian Laws—EXOD. XX.-XXIII., DEUT. XX.-XXV.; (5) The Worship: (a) *The Altar*—EXOD. XX., (b) *The Tent of Meeting*—EXOD. XXXIII., (c) *The Ark and the Tables of Stone*—EXOD. XXXIV., DEUT. X. THE GOLDEN CALF—EXOD. XXXII. THE DEPARTURE FOR CANAAN—NUM. X. XI. THE DISOBEDIENCE OF MIRIAM AND AARON—NUM. XII. THE SPIES—NUM. XIII. XIV. WATER FROM THE ROCK—NUM. XX., cf. DEUT. III. IV. THE BRAZEN SERPENT—NUM. XXI. BALAAM—NUM. XXII. XXIV. FINAL EXHORTATIONS—DEUT. I.-XXX. CHOICE OF JOSHUA—DEUT. XXXI. DEATH OF MOSES—DEUT. XXXIV.

#### *Section I. "The Wisdom of the Egyptians."*

NOTHING binds believers so closely to their faith as the knowledge and feeling that they are in a minority. Only one thing more fortunate for their faith can happen, that they should be persecuted for their belief and should belong to a proscribed sect. Divine Providence had moulded the *Elohism* of the Patriarchs in the school of minorities. Now it was preparing to completely consecrate it in the hardships and sufferings of slavery. Already men had learnt to

worship Elohim as One Who guides and blesses in the midst of foreign nations. Now they would worship and follow much more fervently the Elohim Who answers prayer and rescues from the heavy hand of a tyrant. And when that Elohim begins to command, He will find all His strength and most of His right to obedience in the fact that He can preface His commands with these simple words :

"I am the Elohim Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

The family of Abraham had become a people, and a people of martyrs. Then their cry went up to the Elohim of their fathers. God raised up Moses, snatched Israel from the fiery furnace and brought them to the foot of Sinai, where the words of His revelation transformed those tribes of slaves into the nation of Jehovah.

The cause of the change in the Israelites' condition in Egypt is thus stated : "There arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph." History offers a ready explanation of the allusion. While the Hyksos kings reigned in Egypt, the Israelites were more or less protected by these Pharaohs of the same race as themselves. But when the revolt of the old Hamitic princes had succeeded in driving out the usurpers, the situation was completely reversed. The Semitic origin of the Israelites, which gained them the favour of the Semitic Pharaohs, laid them under suspicion in the eyes of the Egyptian dynasties which could not help seeing in them accomplices of the Hyksos invasion. As the Hamitic Pharaohs gradually strengthened their hold on the throne, they left no stone unturned to arrest the development and shatter the power of these irrepressible foreigners, grown prosperous in the course of centuries and constituting on the very banks of the Nile a perpetual threat to the safety of the empire. The persecution must have begun under the 18th dynasty, which expelled the Hyksos from Egypt. With the Pharaohs of the 19th dynasty, Seti I. and Ramses II. (Sesostris), systematic oppression had attained its object. Israel was now no more than a nation of slaves. They supplied the hands for the most laborious works, under the lash of taskmasters, and when ill-treatment was not

quick enough in producing its effect, persecution turned to massacre. Israel was doomed.

What had become of the promises of Elohim, the deliverer of their ancestors? The sons of Abraham had not forgotten them. From the depths of their distress they cried out to God. And God, in reply, raised up Moses. "I have heard their cries, I have seen their sufferings, I know the sorrow of my people. Go, and deliver them!"<sup>1</sup> The Prophetic Tradition has preserved the memory of the events surrounding the birth of the hero-deliverer. The episode of Moses "saved from the waters" is not without parallels in the traditions of other nations. There is the well-known legend of Romulus and Remus exposed on the Tiber by the usurper Amulius, to punish their mother, the vestal Rhea Silvia, who claimed Mars for their father. "The cradle in which the babes were exposed," says Livy, "floated some time and was then left stranded by the retreating stream." Then came the famous Roman she-wolf to suckle the twins. Another narrative, much more ancient, is the Assyrian copy of an inscription apparently belonging to the earliest ages of Semitic Chaldaea, in which Sargon I. (Sargina) tells of his childhood.

"I am Sargina, the great King ; the King of Agani.

My mother knew not my father : my family were the rulers of the land.

My city was the city of Atzu-pirani which is on the banks of the river Euphrates.

My mother conceived me : in a secret place she brought me forth :

She placed me in an ark of bulrushes : with bitumen my door she closed up :

She threw me into the river, which did not enter into the ark to me.

The river carried me : to the dwelling of Akki the water-carrier it brought me.

Akki the water-carrier in his goodness of heart lifted me up from the river.

Akki the water-carrier brought me up as his own son. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Exod.* iii. 7-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of the Past*, by Talbot and G. Smith. Vol. 5, pp. 3 and 56.

These two episodes differ from that in *Exodus* in this particular, that they invoke the miraculous and are designed to give two dynasties a divine origin, by the supernatural and unjustly punished births of Romulus and of Sargon; whereas in the Moses episode, there is no suspicion of miracle. The reasons for the exposure on the Nile are historical, and events follow each other without any improbability. We are asked to see in them, quite simply, the providential coincidence which set Moses' education in the environment which was the most severely closed to any of his race, and also the most favourable to the growth of those qualities which made of him the conqueror of Pharaoh and the chief of God's own people.

We not infrequently hear it said that in God's work, faith is all-sufficient, and zeal compensates for lack of knowledge. To counter this prejudice (whose smallest fault is to make mischief between Martha and Mary, or Science and Faith) it is interesting to note, on the threshold of both Covenants, at what pains Providence has been to equip with the widest knowledge the two men appointed by God to be their founders, Moses and Saul of Tarsus. "When Moses was cast out," said Stephen, echoing the story from *Exodus*, "Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."<sup>1</sup> We have already seen what this wisdom could be in the domain of ethics and religion. There were others, such as astronomy, mathematics, the arts, politics, and literary culture. But the refinements of Egyptian civilization could also offer Moses, in his extraordinary position, many powerful and varied temptations. Moses did not yield to the allurements of his surroundings. He was proof against the fascination of courts, and had no thought but for the sufferings of the slaves. A chance occasion revealed his affection for his countrymen and impatience of tyranny. His temerity all but cost him his life. Giving up everything he fled to the land of Midian.

Moses possessed already learning and patriotism: what was still lacking to perfect the leader's and prophet's soul,

<sup>1</sup> Acts vii. 21, 22.



was the experience of the desert, the discipline of sacrifice and lonely meditation. These exile now supplied. The prince had become a shepherd, leading the flocks of his new family over the poor pastures of Horeb. What conflicting thoughts, springing out of the contrasts of his own life, must have beset him during his long seclusion on the edge of the desert! At times, while his eyes scanned the lifeless landscape, it must have seemed to him that, like it, everything else was dead: dead his career at the court and in the tribe of his fathers: dead the hopes of his people: dead the age-old promises which had attracted Israel into Egypt as by a lying mirage. . . . Elohim, Abraham's Elohim, could he also be dead? Then it was that in one of those visions which dazzle the eye of conscience, God stopped Moses beyond the desert and said to him: "I am *He that liveth*."

The Elohim of Abraham assumes the name, "JEHOVAH, THE LIFE-GOD."

### Section 2. *The Call.*

This vision is the central event of Hebrew *Jehovism*, just as the vision of St. Paul on the road to Damascus is the central event of the apostolic Church. There is no more reason to question the reality of the burning bush—*flagror non consumor*—than to throw doubt upon the great light which struck down the apostle of the Gentiles. And, as the vision of Saul was accompanied by a revelation which the apostle afterwards called his *Gospel*, so Moses also received, in this spiritual meeting with God, the *Gospel* which was to be the keynote of all the preaching of the Prophets. This revelation and this "Pentecost" in the land of Midian are naturally rejected by the historians who do not believe in the direct intervention of God in history. But as, after all, a plausible reason must be found for the transformation of a runaway and bewildered shepherd into the greatest religious innovator of antiquity, the critics have recourse to the most ingenious explanations. Jehovah, say they, was the God of storms, dwelling in Sinai; his worshipper and priest was Jethro or Reuel, Moses' father-in-law; and Moses, influenced by his father-in-law, and predisposed by his knowledge of

Egyptian religion to the notion of monotheism, "appropriated for his own purposes the attributes of a poor little local deity devoid of interest or value."<sup>1</sup> Such is the "historical" origin which they would assign to the religion which gave the world the Decalogue, the commandment of Love, the Law of Holiness, and the message of the Prophets!

It would be easy to demonstrate the scientific inadequacy of these hypotheses taken severally, and the arbitrariness of their combination. A scholar of the first rank who kept himself free from any denominational bias, the late Professor Max Müller, speaking of Abraham, explained, quite simply, why Hebrew *Jehovism* not only had the intuition of a deity common to the whole human race, but genuinely attained to the knowledge of the one God, denying the existence of all other gods. He declared his belief that Abraham had been the recipient of a really special revelation, in the fullest sense of the term. The Father of truth chose out His Prophets and spoke to them in a voice louder than thunder, that same internal voice through which God speaks to us all, and which can at times peal like a voice from heaven in the ears of God's elect. The term "divine instinct" might have a more scientific sound, but it was not the correct name for a gift granted to but a fortunate few, nor a more scientific expression than "special revelation." Max Müller was right. The term "revelation," so far from being opposed to that of "science," as superstitious unbelief is so fond of repeating, is on the contrary precisely the most *scientific* term to use in certain circumstances, because it is the only one which can make *intelligible* this or that concatenation of events, or this or that fresh departure, which cannot be explained either by antecedents or personal genius, or the logic of circumstances reduced to their ordinary historical elements.

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch, in *Babel und Bibel* (p. 47), tries vainly to demonstrate the existence of the name Jehovah as that of a Canaanite deity of the time of Hammurabi. The transcription on which he relies, *Jahweilu* (which he renders "*Jahveh is God*"), has not been accepted by the majority of Assyriologists, and the name which he reads thus may equally well be read as *Jaumailu*, *Jabiilu*, etc., meaning "*God is*" or "*may God protect*," etc., without any allusion to Jehovah. On questions of historical fact the appeal is to history alone; and as regards a pre-Mosaic Jehovah, history gives not the slightest hint.

The whole revelation, of which Moses was the mouthpiece and the hero, can be summed up in the statement drawn from the first communications of God with the shepherd of Horeb, "*I, the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I am JEHOVAH.*" What is the meaning of Jehovah? The most diverse explanations have been offered of the short formula in *Exodus* iii. 14, which introduces the revelation. "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH"—"I am he that is," "I am that I am," or else "I am what I am," "I am (or shall be) what I will"; or else again, "I am he who procureth life," "I am the Immovable" (that is, in point of faithfulness), "I am the Everlasting" (as regards duration), etc. In these explanations, which are not all clear, or even correct, and many of which reduce the formula of the revelation to an enigma or theological commentary, the only permanent element is the initial statement: "I am," that is to say, the affirmation of existence or Life. The same word "*Ehyeh*" reappearing at the end of the formula must be translated the second time in the same way as the first, and expresses, in both cases, the same idea, the idea of existence or *life*. To give the formula an intelligible meaning, without adding any moral or metaphysical commentary, we must perforce translate quite simply: "I AM he who (can say) I AM." In other words: "I am *he who possesseth life*," "I am *he who liveth*." Such is the importance of this assertion of life in the revelation of God in Horeb, that Elohim Himself, immediately after pronouncing the formula we have just explained, sums up in a single word the whole Gospel which Moses is to carry to his people, and the word is *Ehyeh*, I AM; in other words, "*The Living One*."

Thus shalt thou answer the children of Israel: "The Living One (I AM) hath sent me to you."<sup>1</sup>

The central idea in the name *Jehovah*, which is derived from the same Hebrew root as *Ehyeh* (I am), is not that of *duration* but of *life*. It is this idea which in after ages constituted all its moral energy and all its religious power. The Hebrew mind is averse to metaphysical speculation, and does not meditate on absolute being; on the other hand, all

<sup>1</sup> *Exod.* iii. 14.

its religious philosophy revolves within these four cardinal points: life and death, non-existence and reality. What agitated the pious Israelite was the question whether his faithfulness to Abraham's Elohim might not be a "chasing of the wind," whether he might not be worshipping an idol of the "non-existent." He wondered if the hopes of his fathers had foundered in the stress and storm of the ages, or else if his ancestral protector was *living* and the glorious destinies, of which the slaves in Egypt endured the bitterest birth-pangs, were still real and true. In replying to Moses: "I, the Elohim of thy fathers, I am the *Life-God*," Jehovah was answering the sighs of all His people, and pronouncing over their hopes the words of resurrection.

We may go further. The revelation of Jehovah, in answering the sighs of Israel, was at the same time answering the prayers of all the religions of the world. The prayer which sums up all the prayers of which we caught an echo in the pages we have quoted is just the one unchanging cry: "Give me life, O my God! Deliver me from the demon who affrighteth me, from the enemy who lieth in wait, from the sickness which slayeth the body, from the affliction which killeth the heart, from the remorse which tormenteth the conscience, and from the mortal agonies in which die all my hopes, my hopes of the world beyond." Death, the terror of all mankind; and life, its sole aspiration. The whole history of religion is nothing else than the history of human effort to wrest from heaven the secret and the springs of Life. This effort has assumed three forms: in the *myths*, popular imagination attempted to grasp the origins of things and the bond which joins man to God; in religious *rites*, priestly learning strove to secure the goodwill of the gods on behalf of the tormented soul; lastly, in *ethical* speculation, the deepest thinkers laboured to trace out for human conscience a path of virtue leading to God as its goal. But none of these three elements, which lie at the root of all dominant religions, could give man what he expected. Everywhere the original illusion was followed by decay. The history of religion, after the sublime appeal, "*It is Life that I must have*," and after the vicissitudes of human effort to appropriate

the springs of Life, shows us humanity, beaten and disillusioned, returning to the cradle of its original idolatry, and seeking rest in a practical polytheism in which the soul, under the heel of the senses, gradually acquires the vices of slavery.<sup>1</sup> The Bible's reply to this defeat of human religions is the triumph of the divine revelation, answering the prayers of Israel.

"I am JEHOVAH."

So then there was a definite place and time in which human prayer achieved its object and human striving towards Life reached its goal. It was when the true God Who had stooped in His love to take the form of an Elohim, the Elohim of Abraham, at last rent the veils which the infirmities of His creature had rendered inevitable,<sup>1</sup> and revealed Himself in His divine reality as the *Living* God, towards Whom all hands were stretched: "I, your Elohim, I am the Life-God, Jehovah." Humanity, prostrate before the unknown object of its worship, cried to Him, "I must have *Life*." Jehovah, by replying "I am the *Life*-God," gives an answer to the universal worship of the whole world. Moses at Sinai founded the final religion, because the God revealed at Sinai answers the prayer of all mankind.

"I am JEHOVAH."

By assuming this name, the Elohim of Israel, in the revelation at Horeb, distinguishes Himself from other Elohim by this characteristic that *He exists*. He is the Elohim *Who is*, as opposed to those who are not. His essential property is to be the truth-god as opposed to the falsehood-gods, the life-god as opposed to the death-gods.

Critics may deny that Moses' preaching explicitly set forth the doctrine of the only God, just as they deny that

<sup>1</sup> Even were we compelled to admit, as Herbert Spencer contemptuously says, that Almighty God assumed the disguise of the human form to make an alliance with a Syrian shepherd-chief, we should reply that the Bible has no need to be ashamed of this so-called *disguise*, which is more truly a benevolent *manifestation*, a dim shadow and prelude of an abasement much deeper still, to which we owe our salvation: "Christ Jesus . . . emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (*Phil.* ii. 7, 8).

God, desiring reunion with men, was obliged to approach them by degrees, and to use language within the range of their intelligence.

Jesus, in His teaching, directly condemned slavery. But as slavery was incompatible with the realization of the principles of Christianity, no more could the *Elohistic* belief in a plurality of patron-gods survive the institution of *Jehovism*. The schools of Wellhausen and Renan aim at proving that, for Moses, Jehovah was the god of Israel exactly as Chemosh was the god of Moab, etc. If this were so, and the conception of the national god completely accounted for the whole conception of Jehovah, it would be difficult to understand why Chemosh and other national gods disappeared, while Jehovah not only survived, but finally became the universal god of the civilized world, showing thereby that the original conception acted like leaven on the religion of humanity. Undoubtedly, for the bulk of the people and even for its chiefs in the time of the Judges, Jehovah was still no more than the Elohim of Israel. But neither Jephthah's theology nor Samson's ethics can claim relationship with the Decalogue, and it is not in the Book of Judges that we can look for the practice of pure *Jehovism*. Besides, at no point in its history is it allowable to confuse the religion of the mass of the Israelites with the revelation of Moses and the *Jehovist* Gospel of Sinai. When an army crosses a bridge, the leaders and advanced-guard have long crossed, while the main body of regiments is still crowded on the other bank. So it is in every forward march in the conquest of truth. In Israel, the prophets, the psalmists, the best of the believers, Joshua, and Moses, proclaimed, from the days of Sinai, the Oneness of the living God. But this did not prevent the people from remaining obstinately attached for centuries to the old theology of the patron-Elohim. It cannot be denied: speaking generally, the national Jehovah presented to us in the historical books of the Old Testament is no other than the particular Elohim of Israel, worshipped under the name of Jehovah. Israel, and often even the priests and kings, believed in the existence of other Elohim. That is why, in every page of the history of the two kingdoms, we find court, priesthood, and worshippers of Ephraim and Judah changing so frequently and at so little cost from the worship of Jehovah to that of foreign Elohim.

Renan's and Wellhausen's theories on this point fail because they have not grasped the conception of "Elohim." They have not seen that a strictly national Jehovah would have offered nothing new, that such a notion was entirely covered by that of the patron-Elohim, which had existed everywhere since the age of the Patriarchs. If the revelation in Horeb had been concerned only with a national god, it would have added nothing to what all the world already knew, that is to say that *El-Shaddai* or *El-Elohe-Israel* was the Elohim of Israel. *Jehovah* would have been merely a word, a proper name, and revolutions are not made by means of a word. Now it is indisputable that the revelation of Horeb did produce a revolution, established a nation and founded the universal religion. We must go further. If Moses preached only a national Jehovah, the preaching of the Prophets,<sup>1</sup> the inspired adoration of the Psalms, the lessons of Deuteronomy, and the ancient portions of the Priestly Tradition are inexplicable. For they all agree in proclaiming that what makes the exceptional good fortune of Israel and the providential grace of its election, what raises its religion above all others and makes the future and the universal kingdom belong to it and no other, is the fact that its Elohim is not merely *called* JEHOVAH, but *is* JEHOVAH, that is, the only Elohim who really exists.

Israel's Elohim is not a god, he is GOD. That is the new fact revealed to Moses in Horeb. And that new fact explains all subsequent history.<sup>2</sup> The secret of the irresistible impetus of Israel, of their conquests and glorious destiny in spite of their faults and chastisements, is that they were chosen by the *true God*. From the days of Moses, to whom this revelation was vouchsafed, there was in Israel a constant succession of men who understood this and preached it, and those men were the salt of the nation:

<sup>1</sup> See *Amos* iii. 3-6, iv. 11-13; *Isaiah* xxxvii. 14-20, xl. 12-18, xli. 4, xliii. 11-13, xlv. 4-8, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ showed that this was the proper interpretation of the Mosaic revelation, when, in His reply to the scribe, He summed up the theology of Sinai in the words: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is *one*." Cf. *Mark* xii. 28-34.

at first its spiritual chiefs, then its "remnant,"<sup>1</sup> the little flock among whom Jesus Christ was one day to gain his first disciples.

"I am JEHOVAH."

From the day when these words were spoken, humanity entered a new phase of its existence. It passed from childhood to manhood. God no longer regarded it as too young to understand, and at the foot of Sinai it might have made to God the same answer that the disciples were one day to make to Jesus, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb."<sup>2</sup> Transformed itself into a witness of the One universal God by this revelation of Jehovah, the perfect and absolute, living and life-giving Person, the object of the confused prayers of all religions, Israel ought to have turned to the other nations and said to them what St. Paul later said to the Athenians, "What ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you."<sup>3</sup> In fact, the purpose of Israel's existence was now to represent on earth Jehovah, the Life-God. The universal God must have a nation for His witness. But, to be equal to their mission, the enslaved tribes must first be liberated and then combined and organized to form God's people. And this double task was for Moses to perform.

### *Section 3. The Deliverance.*

The call of Moses is the prototype of all calls in the Biblical history of Revelation. All other calls are like it. They all tell us that, contrary to what took place in other religions, the men who led Israel in the search for God did not owe to their own initiative or their own genius the internal light which impelled them. See rather how they struggle in the grasp of God, Who steps into their life, turns them back and sends them forth shuddering to face humanity. Not one of them offers himself: they are all taken by force. Not one pursues the normal tenor of his destiny. The revolution they herald begins with their own lives. All have something to leave. Abraham must give up his home. The rest must deny themselves. "Do not send me!" entreats Moses. "Go!" says Jehovah. "Take away my life," cries Elijah in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Isaiah* x. 19-21, xi. 16, xxviii. 5.    <sup>2</sup> *John* xvi. 29.    <sup>3</sup> *Acts* xvii. 23.



the desert. "Go!" says Jehovah. "I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet," exclaims Amos following his flock. "Go!" says Jehovah. "I am but a little child; let me go!" implores Jeremiah. "Go!" says Jehovah. "Save me from my infirmity!" prays St. Paul. "Go!" says Jehovah. And that one imperious word "Go!" occurring from end to end of the Bible epic, shatters all resistance, overcomes every obstacle, stimulates every heroism, and explains every miracle. It presents to a bewildered world the spectacle of heroes vanquished but victorious, bending under the weight of their divine mission, from Moses and his righteous indignation, to John the Baptist in the anguish of the dungeon: to St. Paul in his tribulations: to, if I dare say it, Jesus Himself crying out in His agony: "Father, save me from this hour! . . . But not my will but Thine be done." Such is the procession of victims through whom God conquered the world. But in their martyrdom they gave the supreme proof that human nature, left to its own unaided strength, unaided inspiration, could never by its own initiative have given to the world "the salvation that cometh of the Jews."

After many hesitations (which gave the Priestly Tradition an excuse for magnifying the rôle of Aaron, the patron of the priesthood, in the work of liberation)<sup>1</sup> Moses obeyed and accepted the mission. He returned to Egypt, sought out Pharaoh, claimed in the name of Jehovah the at least temporary liberation of the Israelite slaves, and obtained it only after a series of catastrophes which forced the tyrant's hand. These catastrophes are told us in different ways by the two traditions, which agree only in their account of the last of them, in which the Pharaoh, for refusing to liberate the first-born of Jehovah among the nations, sees death striking down in a single night all the first-born of Egypt. According to the Priestly Tradition,<sup>2</sup> Moses, repulsed by his

<sup>1</sup> In the Prophetic Tradition, the rôle of Aaron is much less conspicuous. It might perhaps be almost non-existent, were it not for the final reviser's work of harmonization.

<sup>2</sup> The Priestly Tradition recognizes only five wonders and the death of the first-born. To reconstruct it, read *Exod.* vii. 8-13, 19-20, 21 (end), 22; viii. 1-3, 11<sup>b</sup>-15; ix. 8-12 (xi. 9-10); xii. 1-20, 28, 37, 40-41, 43-51.

See Westphal, *Sources du Pentateuque*, i. p. 275.

people, and discouraged by the difficulty he found in speaking in public, feared that his dealings with the king of Egypt might be fruitless. Then God sent Aaron with him, warning him that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, which would necessitate miracles and prodigies to legalize in the eyes of all his mission of deliverer. It was like a challenge from the God of Israel to the gods of Egypt. Pharaoh and Moses confronted each other. Aaron and the magicians entered the lists to decide which of the combatants was the victor, and the trial commenced. At first the honours were equally divided: the magicians copied the first three prodigies (the serpents, the blood and the frogs); but the fourth (the lice) was beyond them, and the fifth hit them hard (the boils); and, Pharaoh still refusing to be convinced and to bow to the orders of Almighty Jehovah, a terrible punishment was meted out to him (the death of the first-born), which hastened events by wresting from the king the decree of emancipation.

In the Prophetic Tradition<sup>1</sup> the whole scene is presented in a far more solemn and magnificent manner. The question whether Pharaoh will or will not believe in Moses' mission is not even touched upon. Strong in the confidence of his people and arrayed in the authority of his mission, Moses seeks out Pharaoh, not as an ambassador from one king to another, but with a formal summons to the tyrant from Jehovah. In the Priestly Tradition, the people of Israel turned a deaf ear to the appeals of Moses, and Moses himself could do nothing without Aaron. The envoys of Jehovah were compelled, so as to prove their credentials, to stoop to a duel with the idolatrous magicians, who, in the opening bouts, proved themselves Aaron's equals. But here, there is no more question of combat or of go-between. Moses issues commands and will not allow the Pharaoh, who is only a man, to discuss the orders of Jehovah, Who is God.

<sup>1</sup> The Prophetic Tradition records seven plagues: blood, frogs, flies, murrain, hail, locusts, darkness, death of the first-born. To reconstruct it, read *Exod.* vii. 14-18, 20, 21, 23-29; viii. 4-11<sup>a</sup>, 16-20, 21-28; ix. 1-7, 13-35; x. 1-20, 28, 29; xi. 4-8; xii. 29-33, 42.

See Westphal, *op. cit.* i. p. 279.

The king resists and is punished. He resists again, and is smitten. He wavers between pride and fear, and his kingdom is ravaged and his people decimated. His own son dies, as it were, on the very steps of his throne; and still Moses stands there, commanding and terrible. At this rate, Egypt, if need be, will pass away, but the word of God will not pass away. The death of his son and the clamour of his people decide Pharaoh to let his slaves go.

No monument or document has so far been discovered mentioning the memorable fact of the Exodus. But a recently discovered Egyptian inscription mentions Israel among the nations subject to Pharaoh Meneptah. Now the buildings erected by the slave tribes carry us back to the 19th dynasty, particularly to the reign of Ramses II. (Sesostris), and inscriptions tell us that the reign of his successor, Meneptah, was troubled by the death of his first-born, a beloved son whom he had already associated with himself in the government. It is therefore permissible to suppose, with some degree of certainty, that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was this Meneptah (elsewhere called Merienptah II. or Amenephthes) who ascended the throne after the famous despot "Sesostris," and whose accession coincided, in all probability, with the end of the 14th century B.C.

The Israelites, suddenly freed from an age-long state of slavery through the panic of their oppressors, fled with a precipitate haste which was afterwards commemorated by the feast of *Unleavened bread* or the *Passover*.<sup>1</sup> Before them stretched the desert. To reach the land promised to the Patriarchs, they had to cross the difficult region of lagoons and bitter lakes; and at the moment when they reached the northern extremity of the Red Sea, the fugitives learnt that once more in the soul of the Egyptian tyrant self-interest had mastered fear, and that the army of the oppressors was in hot pursuit. Humanly speaking, they were lost. But God was watching, and would not let them

<sup>1</sup> They started without having time to make the dough rise: hence "unleavened bread." "Passover" commemorates the passing over from Egypt to the promised land.

be crushed at the very first stage of their journey of faith. In answer to their prayer, He let loose an impetuous north-east wind, which, as has often been observed in that country, blew back the waters of the Red Sea and separated them from the lagoons, exposing high and dry a tongue of land sufficient for the passage of the persecuted tribes. When the persecutor arrived, and in his turn ventured upon the improvised road-way, a gust of wind brought back the tide, which swallowed up "the horse and his rider." Thus the Prophetic Tradition, which shows us Jehovah once more employing perfectly natural causes to answer the prayers of His children. This event, which was for the faith of Israel a kind of baptism of fire, was later on the theme of song, and we have a hymn,<sup>1</sup> which by an exaggeration natural to enthusiasm and poetry, pictures the waves as cloven in two, the water standing up on the right and the left like gigantic walls, and Israel passing dryshod in the bottom of the sea. The Priestly Tradition, fixed long after the Prophetic account and the hymn celebrating the miraculous deliverance, included in the narrative the statements both of history and of poetry. Whence a second version of the crossing of the Red Sea, now mingled with the first, in which Israel is supposed to have had to right and left, during their crossing at the bottom of the sea, walls of water standing erect.<sup>2</sup>

Free at length to pursue their destiny under Jehovah's guidance, the children of Israel, with Moses at their head, plunged into the lonely peninsula of Sinai. In the course of their march towards the chain of Horeb and Sinai, the Hebrews only once crossed swords with an enemy barring their road. These were the Amalekites, a very ancient tribe occupying the deserts south of the Dead Sea and in the peninsula of Sinai. But the character of the soil and the climate of Arabia put endless difficulties in the path of the pilgrims. "Even if there are oases with welling springs and palm trees, water in these desert regions is scarce, and,

<sup>1</sup> *Exod.* xv. Cf. also *Ps.* lxvi. lxxvii. lxxviii. ; *Isaiah* xliii. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Exod.* xiv. 22, contradicting the *Jehovist* account in xiv. 21<sup>a</sup>, which speaks of *driving back*, not of *dividing* the waters.

when found, often undrinkable from being bitter or salt. The Hebrews more than once had cruel experience of it, as in the camping-ground they called *Mara*, that is *bitter*. It is not always easy in the desert to procure the food necessary to sustain life. The Israelites many times suffered hunger; but the God Who had rescued them from Egypt had not drawn them out of their bondage to let them perish miserably in the solitudes and arid valleys of Sinai. Quails, which abound in the peninsula, edible plants and the juice of certain shrubs contributed to supply them with sustenance."<sup>1</sup> After a succession of trials, due now to the backslidings of the people, now to the difficulties of the journey, the caravan of the ransomed of Jehovah at length reached the holy mountain, where God had appeared to Moses, and whose name was to be used thenceforward in history as a symbol of the Covenant of the Law. It was then, during the sojourn of the Israelites in the mountain mass of Sinai, that the mission of the prophet-legislator received its decisive consecration and that God taught him the fundamental institutions by which the runaway tribes became a nation, and that nation the kingdom of Jehovah.

#### *Section 4. The Kingdom of Jehovah.*

It is impossible to understand clearly the religious and social work of Moses without distinguishing sharply the documents of the Prophetic from those of the Priestly Tradition. The actual books of the Pentateuch, in which the two traditions are combined, offer a totally incoherent picture of religion and worship in the age of Moses. We find there, in fact, in identical circumstances, both singleness and plurality of sanctuaries; sumptuous altars and an altar of unhewn stones; a magnificent Tabernacle and a humble Tent of meeting; a complete, complicated and very strict system of feasts and sacrifices, and the most rudimentary and elastic ordinances in both these departments; a firmly established sacerdotal hierarchy, and a complete absence of a priestly caste, its place being supplied by a universal

<sup>1</sup> E. Montet, *op. cit.* p. 40.

priesthood ; etc. We cannot hold that all these institutions, contradictory in fact and in intention, existed simultaneously in the same social organism, any more than the same government can be simultaneously republican and monarchical, or the same man at one time both Roman Catholic and Protestant. We must choose. Now the moment we reconstitute the separate traditions, the contradictions disappear. Everything is explained and drops into its proper place. The Prophetic Tradition,—with the *Jehovist* document (or more accurately, the *Jehovist* and the *Second Elohist*: JE) describing the institutions of Moses' lifetime, and *Deuteronomy* (D) containing the elements of the legislation which Moses hoped to bring about in the future<sup>1</sup>—shows us a state of affairs corresponding perfectly with what one might expect from the first coming together of nomad tribes and the first demands of a spiritual worship. The altar was of earth or rough stones, erected as chance might suggest ; the sanctuary was a simple tent, in which Moses met Jehovah and before which at the evening halt the Prophet pronounced judgement, explained oracles and sowed untiringly the words of life in the rough souls of his fellow-pilgrims. His code of laws was not a learned and intricate ritual, crammed with unrealizable exactions, but, around and above a few regulations concerning hygiene and social order, *Ten Words*, short, clear, going straight to the conscience and making known to Israel what was necessary to build up, in the midst of a sinful humanity, the Kingdom of Jehovah. As a commentary on these Words, we have the lessons of the desert, with their punishments and favours ; a few summary precepts concerning feasts and sacrifices, and strongly emphasizing the character of a *ransomed people* which distinguished the sons of Abraham from other nations ; and, finally, the powerful exhortations of the Prophet, of which *Deuteronomy* has preserved the theme, and which can be summed up in the "Law of Love." Such are the main outlines of the work of Moses, according to the Prophetic Tradition. Must we therefore conclude that the Priestly Tradition, so different from this one, is to be regarded as fiction and

<sup>1</sup> See Westphal, *Sources du Pentateuque*, ii. p. 241.

rejected as apocryphal? By no means. It was put together late, completed more than a thousand years after the events it chronicles, and elaborated in the bosom of a priestly caste, whose spirit it faithfully reflects. It is perfectly sincere, and its attitude towards primitive *Jehovism* is somewhat like that of the Roman Catholic tradition towards the primitive Church. Romanism sees the "upper chamber" through its Cathedrals and crowns Peter with the papal tiara: the Priestly Tradition saw the Tabernacle through Solomon's temple and set the tiara on the head of Aaron. In both cases there is the same historical mirage at work. But, just as Roman Catholicism had no other intention but to follow out the Christian principles, and preserves at its foundations the words of Jesus Christ, so the Priestly Tradition made it a duty to interpret Moses' programme. It delivered it as it had received it, and applied it as it understood it, and, undoubtedly, among the sources it relies upon (many of which contain simply the ritual of the first Temple) a certain number are of considerable antiquity, and may very well contain information about the Mosaic age.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty is to find these fragments and to replace them in their proper framework. The historian who would write with any certainty about the remote ages which witnessed the birth of the chosen people, must cling to the Prophetic Tradition. He must deny himself any recourse to later texts which contradict it. Finally, he must never forget, while using the most authentic documents, that though the general trend of Israel's destiny comes from God, its historical record is the work of men; and these men, inspired but not mere machines, reported the acts of Providence as they saw them, the divine guidance as they understood it, and the events of the past as the record of them was fixed by the memory of after-generations. The scientific method demands some sacrifices. But there is no cause for alarm if we have to deny to the Mosaic age the sumptuous ritual of priests and worship. The loss really involves only inferior institutions and forms, in which the sanctuary of Israel

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* the laws of *Leviticus* xix. and xx., which contain all the elements of the Decalogue, and the commandment respecting the love of the neighbour.

resembled all the great sanctuaries of antiquity: golden vessels, candlesticks, brazen basins, perfumes, curtains, service of the altar and priests' costumes, all of these we find more or less everywhere, and especially in Egypt, Phoenicia and Chaldaea. And these things are the old bottles, which are always dangerous for new wine. But the original elements in the Mosaic worship, the new wine of the revelation of Sinai, are the Decalogue, unique in the religious history of antiquity; the altar, which no iron must touch for fear of profanation; the Tent of meeting, where Moses spent hours in prayer, speaking with God "as a friend speaks to his friend"; and the religion of love, election and filial obedience expounded in the great discourses of *Deuteronomy*. These facts and doctrines, and not the elaborate Levitical symbolism, constitute the real Mosaic *Jehovism*, in other words, the earliest historical form of worship "in spirit and truth."

A revision of the teaching concerning Moses is imperative for every Church which would avoid a rupture between Science and Faith. The urgency of such a reform is a sufficient excuse for dwelling at exceptional length on the religion of Sinai, which is at once so important and so ill-understood. Let us divide our study of its principle, its law and its worship, into three sections:

A. *Jehovism*.

B. The charter of *Jehovism* (the Decalogue and Law of Love).

C. The *Jehovist* worship in its primitive forms.

#### A. JEHOVISM.

What passed on the Mount between the Prophet and his God? Traditions are incomplete and inconsistent, but all agree that that was where Jehovah spoke and the Covenant came into being. The religion which sprang from the converse of Moses with Jehovah at Sinai was not a reformation; it was a creation. In all the stages of Revelation, there is none more important. Abraham foreshadowed Moses; Jesus Christ fulfilled him. The revelation of Sinai is there-



fore the central revelation, and we understand it readily, since it was this which gave the world the religion in which God and man are restored to their proper relations, namely *Jehovism*.

What is *Jehovism*?

“I am Jehovah.” By distinguishing Himself from the other Elohim by the name, “*He who is Life*,” God tells His elect that He is the author of all things, the universal Lord. All creatures live by Him. All creation belongs to Him. He is absolutely independent of nature, which He dominates and governs. He has, as touching nature, no need which man can satisfy, and no desire which man can grant. That being so, what could be the meaning, in relation to Him, of such a compact as there was in the worship of Elohim? An external and material sacrifice intended to secure the goodwill of God, to satisfy His needs and to flatter Him with gifts? . . . Gifts? God has no use for them. All things belong to Him; both the man offering the sacrifice and the victim bound upon the altar. Flattering homage? All homage is His due. His glory and power are above all praise, and man might strip himself of everything and still be a debtor to the Most Highest. The objective value of sacrifice, which was a fundamental principle of *Elohism*, or natural religion, entirely disappears on the higher plane of *Jehovism*, or the revealed religion. No one has painted more forcibly than the inspired poet of Psalm l., the gulf which divides the old from the new worship.

I am God, even thy God. . . .

I will take no bullock out of thy house,

Nor he-goats out of thy folds.

For every beast of the forest is mine,

And the cattle upon a thousand hills.

I know all the fowls of the mountains:

And the wild beasts of the field are mine.

If I were hungry, I would not tell thee:

For the world is mine and the fulness thereof.

Will I eat the flesh of bulls,

Or drink the blood of goats?

Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving;

And pay thy vows unto the Most High :  
And call upon me in the day of trouble ;  
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.<sup>1</sup>

It would be impossible to inculcate more clearly that sacrifice in itself, with its accompanying rites, has no objective value in God's eyes, and can henceforward have no other than the purely subjective meaning of a thought expressed in a symbol or a prayer of the heart. And that is why the Decalogue, which contains the whole of the Sinaitic Covenant, says not a word, in all its ten clauses, of external ceremonies of worship or celebration of sacrifices. Of course, it does not exclude them. So far is it from doing so, that Israel, in all the phases of its religious history, persistently attributed to Moses all the rites suggested to it by its own devoutness. And, sure enough, we must trace to the age of the Mosaic institutions the principal country feasts, in which the first-fruits of crops and flocks were offered to Jehovah as a token of gratitude, and the ransoming of the first-born of the people was meant to remind them of their double character of *first-born* and *ransomed* of Jehovah, which marked out Israel as a privileged race, and a witness of the Life-God in the midst of humanity. But in all questions of worship, Israel was left completely free, provided only the highly spiritual principle of the earliest laws was never forgotten : "If thou shalt raise an altar of stone, let not the iron come near it. Thy chisel would profane my altar." Man might sacrifice, to express his gratitude or if he felt the need of giving external shape to his religious promptings. But he must know that sacrifice was not religion, and that the worship expected by Jehovah consisted in serving Him *by becoming the instrument of His will*. God being absolutely free from any need, and absolutely independent of nature, nature being dependent on Him, every personal service or gift to Him was excluded on principle. To serve Him was to consist not in offering Him what was already His, but in guiding conduct so that the universe might really be brought into dependence on Him and under the government of Jehovah

<sup>1</sup> Ps. l 8-15.

its Creator. Now, the free activity of sinful man being the only possible obstacle in the way of the execution of Jehovah's designs, worship was to be the conforming of the creature's will with the Creator's, and a life spent in communion with Him and in bearing witness to Him on the earth: in a word the rule was, not sacrifice, but *self-sacrifice*. A man was not to offer *gifts* but to offer *himself* to Him. Thus, by revealing His true name *Jehovah*, God reveals the true relations which without the Fall would have united, and which will henceforward unite the Creator, the creature and all creation. The God, to whom the world belongs, asserts His will to re-found the world as a *kingdom of God*, through a humanity *restored to obedience*. And the first-fruits of that humanity are Israel, whose protecting Elohim is called Jehovah: "Ye shall be unto me an *holy nation*."<sup>1</sup> So *Jehovism*, the worship of the true God, brings back upon earth, to bless it, the true religion, the religion of conscience. And consequently the Decalogue, the charter of this religion, saying nothing of ceremonial (in which Israel was like other nations), makes the whole of worship itself rest upon a fact of conscience which distinguishes Israel from other nations and makes it the revealer of true adoration. This fact is the *re-uniting of the moral and religious principles, which had been separated by the Fall*.<sup>2</sup>

Attempts have been made to distinguish in the Decalogue two classes of sins, the religious and the moral. But in reality, in the Ten Words of Jehovah, everything is moral, since man, free, but under the obligation of gratitude, is brought face to face with his duty by precise commands: and everything is likewise religious, since the justification for these commands is not in their own nature, nor in human conscience, but in the will of God. No doubt, the voice of conscience and the will of God meet in the commandments of the Decalogue. But the authority of conscience, the fact that not to kill or steal or lie is *good in itself*, is not here under discussion. To bring His people to understand by themselves that the divine will and the good in itself are one and the same thing, Jehovah orders the good, not in the

<sup>1</sup> *Exod.* xix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pages 65 and 66.

name of morality, but in the name of religion. "Thou shalt not kill! . . . because I do not wish it, *I*, the Life God, thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt." By this tone of command, God at the same time reveals the absoluteness of the moral law. Human conscience, darkened by evil and enslaved to natural instincts, had failed to guide human will towards true goodness. God temporarily takes its place, claims to be Himself the conscience of conscience and pronounces the "*Thou shalt*" which reveals absolutely and categorically the contradiction there is between the natural will of the sinner and his true good. The voice of natural conscience said to man, "*Thou art not what thou oughtest to be.*" The voice of God says to him, "*This is what thou must be,*" thus opposing a superior will to the state of affairs from which mankind was suffering without being able to alter it. At first, the opposition between the spiritual and the natural will is merely external, since the one is in God and the other in man. But the conditions are such that any sincere and loyal Israelite will realize the opposition in his own heart. The voice of his conscience will recognize good in what Jehovah commands, and his faith in God, Who in His love has so marvellously delivered him, will make him love, in the good which He enjoins, the expression of His will and the condition of His service. No doubt, he will not from the outset understand the whole meaning of the divine command; and he will enter the moral fight without foreseeing either its vicissitudes or its final issue. But one thing is enough: he knows that it is a good fight and that God has given him a sure means of victory in obedience to His LAW. In the earnest, imperative "Hear, O Israel" of Jehovah, we have a foretaste of Jesus' principle, "If any man will do the will of My Father, he shall know My doctrine, whether it be of God." Let Israel hear! The Decalogue, combining the moral ideals of the natural revelation of Paganism with the religious ideals of the Patriarchal revelation, reveals the absolute God by revealing the moral God, and gives the absolute religion by founding the moral religion. By establishing the antinomy "*God and Sin*," it teaches that the natural conscience has aspirations because

man was at the start a religious being, that is, a being created in the image of God, and whose law it was to mould himself in the likeness of God. In demanding, in Jehovah's name, the suppression of evil, it explains to Israel that God's object, in offering Himself to the worship of Abraham and in educating the faith of the Patriarchs, was to restore, nourish and guide the religious principle in man, and to reunite man with his Creator, Who alone can re-open for him the path of moral regeneration and give him back the glory of his original destiny, the glory of being the child of God.

Such are, in a few words, the principles of *Jehovism*,<sup>1</sup> the religion of Sinai. *Jehovism* establishes religion in the domain of morality, and gives morality its true meaning by making it the condition of the life in God. In other words, *Jehovism* is the road by which the moral man can of himself, through the clear vision of his duty, arrive at a sense of his powerlessness, a realization of his sin and the wholesome repentance which convinces the tortured soul of the necessity of redemption. But Jehovah could not expect the Hebrews, trembling under the thunders of Sinai, to understand all this! The Hebrews were still at the stage of Elohim-worship, a compact-worship in which adoration, compounded of self-interest and fear, knows nothing higher than the protector-god. Jehovah took this primitive notion as His starting-point from which to advance to the education of His people. His Law, with its lofty purpose, was addressed not to the individual Hebrew, but to Israel, the nation. The Decalogue founded the Theocracy. And the history of the Theocracy shows us the collective self-interest of the nation after long labour giving birth to an *individual conscience*, that is a *moral being* capable of repentance, conversion and salvation. "Hear, O Israel! Other Elohim make their favours depend on the splendour of ritual or the costliness of offerings: but Jehovah, thy Elohim and deliverer, closely binds up the destiny of His people with the keeping of His commandments, and makes His blessings dependent on the moral obedience of the chosen nation: Ye shall be holy, for I am holy."<sup>2</sup> We need not expect to find always in the nations of

<sup>1</sup> See above, pages 65, 66.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Levit.* xix. 2 and *passim*.

the Old Testament the bright light of the Gospel. As Abraham was a Chaldaean, not a Christian, so the Israelite of the wanderings saw in his Decalogue nothing more than a national law. The neighbours, whose life, honour and property must be respected, include to him none besides fellow-citizens. And a detailed study of the Decalogue, or charter of *Jehovism*, shows how all the commandments, taken in their original strictly national meaning, are in logical connexion and succession: first, there is the protecting God, by Whom the nation exists and Who must be honoured both in the day of rest and in work; next, the family, which is the starting-point of national organization; next, the neighbour, whom it is impossible to harm without indirectly affecting the welfare of the nation; and lastly, the community, whose great principles cannot be violated without direct prejudice to the national existence. Everything through the nation, and everything for the nation. When *Deuteronomy* shows us Moses, just about to vanish, exclaiming: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death" (*Deut.* xxx. 19), this final adjuration concerns neither soul nor immortality. It speaks of the life or death of the nation, and of the posterity whose days shall be lengthened or cut short according as its observance or neglect of the law of *Life* does or does not make Israel into the kingdom of Jehovah.

#### B. THE CHARTER OF *JEHOVISM* (THE DECALOGUE AND THE LAW OF LOVE).

The commandments of the Decalogue occur in the four sources of the Pentateuch which tell of the Covenant of Jehovah and Israel at Sinai. But the Prophetic Tradition alone gives the commandments in their natural order. We must only note that the two editions of the Decalogue which it gives us, though identical in the order and wording of the Ten Words, do not agree in the amplifications which accompany them. Thus, the command to keep holy the Sabbath is followed in the two cases by totally different motives. This fact, coupled with the fact that in the

Decalogue, as restored with the aid of *Leviticus* xix., the law of the Sabbath and that of the honour due to parents are laid down without any comment, has led historians to think that, in their original form, the Ten Words, inscribed on tables of stone or *stelae*, according to the fashion of the age,<sup>1</sup> must have been all alike in their brevity and been limited to a statement of law, without any amplification or sanction, perhaps as follows :—

## FIRST TABLE.

I am Jehovah, thy Elohim, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.  
 Let there not be for thee any other Elohim besides me.  
 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.  
 Thou shalt not make vain the name of Jehovah.  
 Remember the day of rest to keep it holy.

## SECOND TABLE.

Honour thy father and thy mother.  
 Thou shalt not kill.  
 Thou shalt not commit adultery.  
 Thou shalt not steal.  
 Thou shalt not bear false witness.  
 Thou shalt not covet.

Thus expressed, the Ten Words may very well have been written on two easily portable *stelae*. As for the various amplifications added to three or four of these Words, which do not agree in the versions which have come down to us, the simplest plan is to regard them as commentaries intended to explain and complete the text of the stone tables.

I AM JEHOVAH, THY ELOHIM,  
 WHO BROUGHT THEE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT,  
 OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE.

The words "Thy Elohim" directly connect the Sinaitic with the Patriarchal covenant. The God of Abraham, by "bringing out of Egypt" the tribes of Israel has given decisive proof of the truth of His promises and the reality of the choice of His people. Thus the Decalogue begins

<sup>1</sup> The Tell-el-Amarna tablets prove the existence of writing at this time (15th cent. B.C.).

with the double affirmation, on which depend the whole sense and bearing of the Sinaitic charter :

"I, who command, am the only God, the Life-God.

Thou, whom I command, art the people whom I have chosen and blessed to be My witness on earth."

We cannot insist too strongly on the idea of *the chosen people*. It is the pivot of all the preaching of the Prophets. Beyond all question it dates from the time of Moses ; the oldest documents of the Biblical literature prove it.<sup>1</sup> The nature and the purpose of this entirely gratuitous election<sup>2</sup> are shown by the metaphors employed in its definition. The election has made Israel Jehovah's "property"<sup>3</sup> and "inheritance."<sup>4</sup> Israel becomes the "subject"<sup>5</sup> of Jehovah, and constitutes a social unit separated from others and "consecrated"<sup>6</sup> to Jehovah. But the image in which the idea is most forcibly expressed in the Old Testament, is that in which Jehovah reveals Himself as a Father, while Israel must conduct himself towards Him as a "son."<sup>7</sup> By the call of Abraham, the blessings showered on the Patriarchs, the protection of the slave tribes in Egypt, and, finally, their liberation from the house of bondage, Jehovah begot, formed and created His people.<sup>8</sup> Then He took upon Himself to nourish it and bring it up ;<sup>9</sup> and, owing to the trouble of it, He became attached to it as a father to a favourite "first-born"<sup>10</sup> son. These thoughts lie at the base of Moses' teaching. Jehovah said at Sinai : "Now therefore, since thou knowest who I am, what thou art, and what thou hast cost me, Hear O Israel !"

<sup>1</sup> See the *Song of Deborah*, *Judges* v.

<sup>2</sup> A free and spontaneous act of Jehovah's love, *Exod.* xix. 5 ; *Deut.* iv. 37, vii. 6 8, viii. 17, x. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Exod.* xv. 16, xix. 5, vi. 7 ; *Num.* xvi. 41 ; *Deut.* vii. 6, xiv. 2, xxvi. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Exod.* xxxiv. 9 ; *1 Sam.* x. 6 ; *11 Sam.* xiv. 16, xx. 19, xxi. 3 ; *Mic.* vii. 14, 18 ; *Deut.* xxxii. 9, iv. 20, ix. 26-29.

<sup>5</sup> *Deut.* xxxiii. 5 ; *Judg.* viii. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Exod.* xix. 4-6, xxii. 36 ; *Levit.* xx. 24-26 ; *Deut.* vii. 6, xiv. 2, xvi. 18. Cf. *Exod.* xxiii. 32, xxxiv. 11 ; *Deut.* vii. 1, etc.

<sup>7</sup> *Deut.* xxxii. 6 ; *Jerem.* iii. 4, 19, xxxi. 9 ; *Isaiah* lxiii. 16, lxiv. 7 ; *Mal.* i. 6, ii. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Deut.* xxxii. 18 ; *Hos.* viii. 14 ; *Isaiah* xliii. 1, 7, 15, 21, etc.

<sup>9</sup> *Deut.* i. 31, viii. 5 ; *Hos.* xi. 3 ; *Is.* i. 2, xlvi. 3, etc.

<sup>10</sup> *Exod.* iv. 22 ; *Jerem.* xxxi. 19, 20. Cf. *Hos.* ii. 1.



We have already seen that the "Hear" is addressed not to an individual, but to a community, and we must insist on this fact, for the point of departure is of prime importance. In fact, it is this which enables us to understand why the Sinaitic revelation, while historically occupying the central place, from a religious point of view is only temporary and, in the words of St. Paul, "Our tutor to bring us unto Christ."<sup>1</sup> In the age and society of Moses, religion was built on the worship of Elohim, the patron-god ; in other words, on individual self-interest : "God for me." Jehovah wished to displace the centre of gravity of human religion, and to bring into being the individual conscience. And this He meant to do by means of the community. But human conscience was not to be renewed in a single day. A mere command, however divine, was not enough to transform egoism into altruism. To overcome individual egoism, the divine Educator substitutes for it national egoism, to which all individual egoisms must bow. A nation called to obey moral commandments, under pain of forfeiture, means individuals compelled, gradually, to sacrifice their sins to the common good, and in this struggle with their own lusts to mould their moral conscience. Each individual, through patriotism, realizes his own moral individuality and by imperceptible steps comes to substitute for his selfish formula "Elohim for me," this other temporary motto in which selfishness and self-renunciation are found intermingled : "Myself for the nation, in order that the nation may obtain the favour of Jehovah." Men say at first, "The nation sins"; a little later, "*we* are sinners"; and finally, "*I* am a sinner and condemned." Then comes John the Baptist, and by the baptism of repentance creates the formula of the final religion : "*God in me, myself for my brethren, by the grace of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*" But the Israelite in the desert was still at the first stage of this slow evolution towards the light of Redemption. For the time being, he saw in the Decalogue no more than a national law, and a condition of temporal promises ; a contract with mutual obligations ; a contract with an Elohim.

From the opening statement are derived two series of

<sup>1</sup> *Gal.* iii. 24.

duties, embodied in two series of commandments. The first four relate to the duties of the chosen nation towards Jehovah, the rest to its duties towards itself.

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|--------------------------|--|
| i. 1st Commandment.      | Jehovah and <i>Elohim</i> .                              |
| ii. 2nd                  | „ Jehovah and Animism.                                   |
| iii. 3rd                 | „ Jehovah and human activity.                            |
| iv. 4th                  | „ Jehovah and human rest.                                |
| v. 5th                   | „ The <i>Jehovist</i> family.                            |
| vi. 6th, 7th,<br>and 8th | „ Individual security in the kingdom<br>of Jehovah.      |
| vii. 9th and<br>10th     | „ Justice and social peace in the<br>kingdom of Jehovah. |

i. JEHOVAH AND *ELOHISM*.

THOU SHALT HAVE NONE OTHER ELOHIM BEFORE  
(OR BESIDE) ME.

Jehovah does not say, "I am not *an Elohim*." It was only gradually that the idea of patron-gods disappeared before the growing light of the *Jehovist* revelation. The process was so imperceptible that we cannot tell the precise moment when Israel abandoned the belief in the reality of foreign gods. But, at the outset, Jehovah prepares for the transformation by laying down clearly that His service is incompatible with the worship of other Elohim. To us now the meaning of the commandment presents no difficulty. The heathen gods, the product of man's brain, bear the stamp of all human creations, and are limited, imperfect and relative. Thus they can co-exist. Instead of mutually excluding, they mutually complete one another. Besides, the religious sense which created them cannot find full satisfaction in any one of them, and so seeks in a multiplicity of imperfect imaginations a remedy for its own impotence. From the victories of one god over another, and the insufficiency of all of them, sprang Polytheism. Thence came friendly and unfriendly, national and foreign gods; thence the worship of

the Pantheon, and, ultimately, the altar to the Unknown God. None of these associations, conflicts and combinations, which employ and exhaust the efforts of other nations, were to exist for Israel. Others might still seek; but Israel had found. Others had chosen their gods; Israel had been chosen. Their Elohim was Jehovah, that is to say a God Who had nothing in common with other gods, either in origin or nature. He revealed Himself freely to a people of His own choice, as the God WHO IS. He showed by His acts that He possessed in Himself what the religious instinct vainly looks for elsewhere in the accumulation of heathen deities: *He will and can save*. He is the Creator, "the Life-God"; He is Jehovah. This being so, nothing but unbelief or ingratitude could suggest prayer to any other gods. The foreign gods had no power to resist Jehovah. Egypt had learned that lesson. And the association of any other god with Jehovah to complete Him was out of the question, since Jehovah was the God *Who is* absolutely. To name another God by His side was to limit His power and strip Him of His true character, and to transfer Him from the domain of the absolute to that of the relative: in a word, to deny Him. That was why the first commandment of His law was necessarily: "Thou shalt have none other Elohim before (or beside) Me."<sup>1</sup>

## ii. JEHOVAH AND ANIMISM.

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE A GRAVEN IMAGE.

There is no reference here to images of Jehovah; nor to the false gods, popularly so-called, which would make the second commandment a repetition of the first. The other Elohim are already proscribed. Here the reference is to the substratum of *Elohimism*, to fetishes, totems, *teraphim*, *penates*, representations of heavenly bodies or animals, little

<sup>1</sup> The gravity of the transgression of this first commandment is forcibly emphasized by the Prophets.

*Exod.* xxxiv. 15; *Judg.* ii. 17; *Hos.* iv. 15, v. 3, vi. 10, ix. 1; *Jerem.* ii. 23-25, iii. 8, xiii. 27; *Hos.* i.-iii.; *Jerem.* ii. 20, iii. 1, 8, 20; *Ezek.* xvi. 23; *Is.* liv. 5; lxii. 5.

figures sharing the nature of a material body tenanted by a spirit, in a word, to the whole paraphernalia of the animistic cult in its period of decay. Now the religion of Egypt, at the time of the Exodus, was thoroughly permeated with the doctrine attributed later to Hermes Trismegistus, according to which man has power "to embody invisible spirits in visible objects," and "to fashion images obeying the spirits." Small wonder. The human soul, deceived by its gods, returns unceasingly to animism. The history of every religion, not excluding Christianity, proves that every religion which either fails to satisfy or lacks good guidance, degenerates invariably into superstition. This is clearly demonstrated by the vogue of modern Spiritualism and Occultism. All worships of this class start from a deification of nature, and it is against a superstition so full of danger to true religion that the second commandment is aimed.

The notion of a revealed God is incompatible with the deification of nature. All things belong to Jehovah, all things come from Him. The sun is His lamp, the wind is His breath, the thunder is His voice, the animals are the work of His hands, His presence gives life to all living things, His protection is sufficient for all things, His wisdom upholds and guides the world. *He is* and His existence is absolute. What room then can there be for superstition? Jehovah is in all things; to Him belong prayers and adoration. Independent as He is of nature which He overshadows and governs, God, Who will not share His worship with any other God, desires that that worship should be like Him distinct from every created being, should rise above nature, should shake itself free from all material elements and concentrate and spiritualize itself so as to be able to set up between Him and His worshippers an effectual communion above false gods and natural superstitions. The object of God in these first two commandments is to free the conscience of His people by showing them that their universal independence is conditional on their exclusive dependence on Jehovah.

## iii. JEHOVAH AND HUMAN ACTIVITY.

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE VOID THE NAME OF JEHOVAH,  
THY ELOHIM.

First, let us justify the above translation and explain its meaning. The ordinary translations, "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain," or else, "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God to swear falsely," are legitimate and, in a sense, correspond truly enough with the idea expressed in the third commandment. The reason why we think ourselves unable to adopt them in a study of the Mosaic notion of *Jehovism* to be found in the Decalogue, is that they appear to us to appropriate to a particular interpretation the much wider and deeper original notion of the respect due to *the name of Jehovah*. According to the ordinary translations, that respect would consist entirely in not lightly using the name of Jehovah. Can we admit that in this document with all its self-restraint and each of its Words containing briefly and concisely a fundamental truth, the third commandment is entirely devoted to a point so limited and so particular? Does it, on the great question of the respect due to Jehovah, reduce that respect to a merely external and verbal notion? In that case, the third commandment would be clearly incomplete and alone of its kind in the whole Decalogue. But the study of numerous texts in which the expression *Shem Jahve* (the Name of Jehovah) is found, enables us, by means of a more faithful rendering, to broaden and deepen in a remarkable manner the bearing of the third commandment. Wherever Jehovah *sets His name* or causes *His name to dwell*, we find that this act implies a display of His power and a revelation of His rule (*Deut.* xii. 5, 11, 21; xiv. 24; xxvi. 2; 1 *Kings* ix. 3; xi. 36). The place where He *causes His name to dwell*, is the place where He abides Himself, the place where He reveals His presence, terrible or merciful, but always effective (2 *Sam.* vi. 2; 1 *Kings* viii. 29; 2 *Sam.* vii. 13). When He says, "*My name shall be there*" (1 *Kings* viii. 29), that means, "There I shall be accessible; they will find me there." In *Exodus* xx. 24

we read, "In every place where I record my *name*, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." The angel walking before Israel to protect him on the march is no other, according to *Exodus* xxiii. 21, than the personification of the *Name* of Jehovah. Wherever the *Name of Jehovah* is used in reference to the people (*Deut.* xxviii. 10; *Jer.* xiv. 9; *Isaiah* lxiii. 19), or a prophet (*Jer.* xv. 16), or the Temple (*Jer.* vii. 10 and foll.; *1 Kings* viii. 4, etc.), the meaning is not that Jehovah is called by His name, but that the people, prophet, or temple is placed under the protection of the Almighty power of Jehovah, Who acts in favour of His own. When Jehovah *succours* Israel *by His name* (*Jer.* x. 6; *1 Kings* viii. 42) the assistance is effected by a display of the forces at the disposal of Jehovah as sovereign master of all existing things.

Jehovah answer thee in the day of trouble ;

*The name* of the Elohim of Jacob set thee up on high  
(*Ps.* xx. 1).

Save me, O Elohim, *by thy name* (*Ps.* liv. 1).

Through *thy name* will we tread them under that rise up  
against us (*Ps.* xlv. 5).

When David advances to meet the giant Goliath, whence comes his confidence? "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin ; but I come to thee in *the name* of Jehovah" (*1 Sam.* xvii. 45). On one side are all the weapons and forces of man, on the other, *the name* of Jehovah, that is, the action of Jehovah. David is unmoved : the strength of Jehovah is greater than that of giants. Many other texts could be quoted, especially those which speak of lifting the hands, lifting the standard, marching, or prophesying, in the *name* of Jehovah (*Ps.* xx. 5, lxiii. 4; *Zech.* x. 12; *Jer.* xlv. 16, etc.), that is to say, through His might. But we must conclude with one final observation. God revealed Himself, and made a covenant with a nation, in order to educate it and ransom it, and by it to save all mankind. How, according to the Scriptures, does He proceed? He works for the love of *His name*, and teaches Israel to know, love, honour, glorify and invoke *His name*. He causes *His name* to be feared, and makes *His name* glorious over all the

earth. "I have let thee live that thou mightest see my power and that men might publish *my name* over all the earth." *His name* is HIMSELF.<sup>1</sup> We may then conclude that the *name of Jehovah* really means *Jehovah Himself* in His relations with His people and through His people with the world. The "glorious and fearful *name*" spoken of in *Deuteronomy* (xxviii. 58) is identical with Jehovah as God revealed, made known and acting in the midst of His people for the salvation of humanity.<sup>2</sup>

To return to the third commandment. With the meaning of Shem-Jahve (the Name of Jehovah) as we have defined it, the ordinary rendering is inadequate. But that rendering itself is far from strict. Literally, the Hebrew expression, "*Loh tissa eth-Shem-Jahve Elohecha lashav*," means, "Thou shalt not bring the name of Jehovah thy God to nought." Put that into English, without a thought of the traditional rendering: "Thou shalt not destroy the name of Jehovah thy God"; or, to adapt as nearly as possible the old words to the new meaning, "Thou shalt not make void (or render vain) the name of Jehovah thy God." In other words: "By thy conduct, thou shalt not make vain My activity in the world. By thy action, thou shalt not hinder My action. My revelation delivered thee from the bondage of false gods, and from the bondage of nature; now conduct thyself so that I may not have laboured in vain, so that My revelation may not be brought to nought. The last false god, the last idol I have to overcome in thee, is thyself. Make not vain the name of Jehovah." Thus restored to its original meaning, the third commandment recovers its full religious significance, without excluding the special meaning assigned to it by tradition.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ps.* xxiii. 3, xxix. 6, cvi. 8; *1 Kings* viii. 4; *Jer.* xiv. 7; *Ezek.* xx. 9; *Is.* xlviii. 9, lxi. 5; *Ps.* cxv. 1; *Exod.* ix. 16; *Ps.* ix. 11; *Jerem.* xlviii. 17; *Is.* lii. 6, lxi. 6, xlii. 8, xlvii. 11; *Mal.* i. 14; *Deut.* xxviii. 58; *Ps.* v. 12, lxxiv. 75, xviii. 2, cxl. 14, iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Observe the sense given to the *name* of God by Jesus Christ. With the negative "Thou shalt not make void the name of Jehovah," corresponds the positive request in the *Lord's Prayer* "Hallowed be thy *name*." Again the expressions "glorify thy *name*," "I have manifested thy *name*," "keep through thine own *name*" (*John* xii. 28, xvii. 6, 11) allude to the *Power of God* which Jesus manifested and through which God will keep His own. Cf. *Ps.* cxxiv. 8 where *name* also means *power*.

On the contrary, it explains and justifies the special meaning by showing false-swearing in Jehovah's name, or the thoughtless use of Jehovah's name, to be one of the commonest and easiest violations of the respect due to Jehovah. The true translation is to the accepted version as the whole to the part, or the general to the particular. There is no cause for surprise in the modification of the idea of the third commandment in the course of centuries. The human mind has a tendency to belittle, materialize, reduce to a single characteristic trait, and enclose in a simplified and easily intelligible formula general and abstract ideas, especially those derived from Revelation. Also, the superstitious cult of the name *Jehovah*, which was established by later Judaism, cannot have failed to influence considerably the interpretation of the Biblical expression, *The name of Jehovah*, and of the order given in the third commandment to *respect the name of Jehovah*. We are too ready to forget that the Hebrew religion, before giving birth to Christianity, passed through a critical period in which Jewish formalism left an indelible impress upon it, and that ample allowance must be made for this period in any study of the Biblical notions of revealed *Jehovism*. Luther thus translates the third commandment: "Thou must not misuse the name of Jehovah, thy God."<sup>1</sup> Which rendering amounts to the same as that which we have proposed, if it be remembered that "the name of Jehovah" signifies the active power of Jehovah. And as the divine power can only be exerted when the object aimed at is in accordance with God's will, to misuse the active power of Jehovah is in reality to prevent its action and to annihilate it.<sup>2</sup> Which brings us back to the sense of our original text: "Thou shalt not make void (or vain) the name of Jehovah."

Lastly, we may say that, by adopting this literal meaning, the logical sequence of the religious commandments is completely restored. The first commandment sweeps away false gods: the second condemns nature-cult superstitions: the third, concerning the man himself, commands the Israelites to avoid any action by which they might aim at appropriat-

<sup>1</sup> "Du sollst den Namen des Herrn, deines Gottes, nicht missbrauchen."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.



ing the power of the revealed God to their own use and hinder the establishment of the Kingdom of Jehovah among men. To resume his former religious position, man must be freed not only from false gods and animistic superstitions, but also from the inclination of his evil nature to substitute his own will for God's, to put himself in God's place and to behave as if he were the master of this world, which belongs to God and knows of no other glory to declare but the glory of God. If the Israelites, with the true religion and the foundation of God's kingdom entrusted to them, see in their exceptional advantages only a means of satisfying their personal ambitions and extending their power over nature and the world, they will be denying their allegiance to the will of God. They will be false to Jehovah's cause, and stultify the relations which God, in His love for the fallen world, has for centuries been labouring to establish between Himself and the human family. The plan of the Kingdom will be destroyed, as the plan of Redemption would have been destroyed, if the Son of Man, yielding to the Temptations in the Wilderness, had deviated to His own personal advantage the miraculous power with which His Heavenly Father had endowed Him. How could God hold him guiltless who misused His power, and by a criminal usurpation destroyed the efficiency of His revelation? "For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, . . . and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (*Heb. vi. 4-6*)."

Thus God could not hold the nation guiltless, which, after being enlightened and tasting the heavenly gift, went astray again like the pagan nations, to live after the lusts of their hearts, denying the love of the Elohim of their fathers and exposing the revelation of Jehovah to ignominy. God having revealed Himself, He must be King: and every check to His rule, whether in heaven or on earth, or in the heart of man, becomes sin. That is why, after the commandments excluding every form of worship but His own in heaven, Jehovah lays down the commandment which excludes every active power but His own from the earth.

## iv. JEHOVAH AND HUMAN REST.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

In the third commandment God orders man not to act in such a way that his action will be opposed to the redemptive action of Jehovah. That commandment is therefore an appeal to man's activity, to an efficient and positive activity, in harmony with the bonds which bind the ransomed Israelite to the revealed God, fusing man's energy with God's, and enabling both Jehovah to have free play in the world and man to develop himself in communion with Jehovah and in His service. In practical language, therefore, the third commandment means: "Thou shalt sanctify thy activity: thou shalt sanctify thy work." From this point of view, the third commandment sheds a flood of light on the religious meaning of the fourth, which is its natural complement, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."

God says to His people:

"I am Jehovah, the Life-God: heaven and earth are Mine. I have made Myself known to Israel. I have redeemed him; he is Mine. I have set him apart to found My Kingdom. Whether he work or rest, his time is consecrated to Me. Israel is the chosen people, the holy nation which glorifies My name upon earth by keeping holy both its work and its rest."

The fundamental idea of the sabbath is that the service of Jehovah must suffer no interruption. Man cannot always work: so rest itself must be consecrated to Jehovah. Men shall keep it holy. And to show quite clearly that rest is a form of Jehovah's service, God establishes a day of rest and makes use of it to round off the week. This is "the sabbath of Jehovah." However, the day of rest is not meant only to emphasize the absolute dependence of Israel on Jehovah, but also to establish the normal relations of man with creation, for creation belongs to God and not to man. Heathen religion which sees in man only what he has in common with nature does not distinguish between the world and him, and sees in the material world only a field in which

human selfishness may have free play. Gods, man, and nature make up one whole in which man recognizes no law but his instinct of self-preservation. Having no respect for the Creator, of whom he has lost even the conception, he is equally without respect for creation, which he makes his slave and whose slave he is himself. The Mosaic revelation, by revealing Jehovah, proceeds to a double deliverance. It frees man from enslavement to nature and nature from enslavement to man, putting each back into a position of dependence on the free and living God. Man belongs to God. In communion with his God, he loses his unhealthy superstitions, his empty terrors, and his fatal weaknesses, and finds in the satisfaction of his religious wants the justification for his existence, his liberty, his rule of life and his goal. Nature also belongs to God. And nature also finds these same things in the revelation of the living God. It was not made to be handed over to man as a town to the pillagers, but to be entrusted to him, that he might develop its resources and realize its wealth, and respect it as the work of the Creator. God is the owner; man is only the tenant. That is the second idea brought out by the sabbath rest, which is not for man alone, but for the whole of creation, which, once every week, thanks to the sabbath, escapes man's supremacy and returns into the direct possession of the Creator. Man retires and leaves the field open to the Creator, and the hallowed rest, extending to all creation, becomes a universal homage to the God Who is all in all. "God all in all" is the law of the Kingdom, the absolute religion, and the state of things desired by God at the foundation of the world and destroyed by the Fall. It is also the purpose of the Mosaic revelation. If there is anything which can set off the beauty of Moses' teaching and the reality of his inspiration, it is this religious doctrine of the Decalogue, which, after freeing the idea of the Godhead from all the chains with which Paganism had bound it, and asserting the absolute unity and sovereign liberty of Jehovah, reveals Jehovah as the deliverer of fallen man and suffering creation, and makes universal redemption consist in a free return to obedience to the Father's will. Israel took long

to understand this doctrine. All the efforts of the Prophets did not suffice to raise the nation to the height of its mission. Man is powerless to realize salvation, because he is powerless to return by himself to obedience to God. But the law has been proclaimed, and stands there as an accusing witness to touch the consciences of men till they sigh for the Redeemer.

Luther says somewhere, about the Decalogue, that it is impossible to imagine any evil which it does not forbid or any good which it does not enjoin. Such a judgement was excusable in an age when grammatical interpretation, psychological observation and enlightened criticism did not yet exist. Since the sixteenth century, in history as in art, we have acquired perspective and we have learnt that in religious matters there is no greater blunder than to assume the whole of Revelation to exist in each separate stage of its development. It is necessary to insist on the point, because few theologians so far have consented to respect in practice this primary axiom of any sound interpretation of the sacred writings. Deny it as they will, they continue to read the Old Testament in the light of the New, a practice which, though it may instruct faith, absolutely precludes any intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew writers or appreciation of their originality, and is a bar to the right understanding of their peculiar language or of the principle and growth of the revelation of the old covenant. It is because it has yielded to the temptation to view Revelation as complete in each of its successive stages of growth, that the Church still regards the Patriarchs as good Christians and recites the Decalogue in the same spirit as the Lord's prayer. As we have already seen, the Patriarchal age was meant not to give man the absolute religion, but to prepare him to understand and receive it. The absolute religion God gave him through Moses in the first table of the Law. The problem now is to awaken religious man to the moral life. As God is, so will man be. Corresponding to the good God there must be a man who desires good: and to the God Who commands, a man who obeys. God undertakes the moral education of His people, and takes as His starting-point the sense of

nationality and the instinct of self-preservation, which is the earliest expression of man's moral nature. Why this starting-point? Because the individual conscience is only gradually evolved out of the national. The more abstract a notion is, the more difficult it is to grasp. Revelation took man in his savage state to lead him to Christ, that is to say, to the conscience of conscience. It could not do this by a magical intrusion of ideas both unintelligible and unacceptable to him. And so God revealed Himself at first as the Protector of a family and taught that family His power and love. Then, through Moses, He began the education of conscience, identifying His divine will with good. Only the opposition between Jehovah and Evil is made more intelligible through the idea of nationality which gives it a concrete form. Evil is that which harms the nation; in religion, it is that which separates the chosen people from Jehovah, in other words, that which weakens it and drags it back into slavery to nature; and morally, it is all that tends to destroy order, to divide and break up the nation, and in a word, all that enfeebles it and drags it back into slavery to its own impotence. In each case, the enfeebled and paralyzed nation becomes the prey of its enemies. To understand the genesis of religious and moral conscience and at the same time to appreciate both the greatness and the limitations of the Mosaic revelation, we must view the Decalogue in this light.

Whatever may be said by those who would derive from the Ten Commandments all the precepts of the Gospel, the second table of the Decalogue does not present so clear or complete a doctrine as the first. The moral law, though each commandment throws some light upon it, is nowhere absolutely clear. Its complete expression is yet to be found. The effect of this want, which is intentional, is to bind very closely the second table to the first, or morality to religion. We are compelled to look to the opening statement, "I am Jehovah, thy Elohim, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," for the justification and sanction of the moral commandments. The knowledge of God and the performance of His moral will are closely knit together. "Even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up

unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting ; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity ; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful.”<sup>1</sup> This passage from St. Paul, with which compare the words of Jesus, “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God,”<sup>2</sup> shows how closely the knowledge of God, the knowledge of His will and the performance of that will are bound together. The first four commandments give us the religious revelation of Jehovah, the absolute God : the rest give the moral revelation of Jehovah, the national God.

#### v. THE JEHOVIST FAMILY.

##### HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

The first, most direct and most sacred duty that lies in the path of a human being is that which binds him by ties of respect, love and obedience to his parents. To break any other law is a crime, but to break the law binding the child to its parents is a sin against nature ; it is breaking all the commandments in one, a violation of the law of one's own existence, a self-contradiction. And so it was proper that the commandment “Honour thy father and thy mother” should fill the first place in the hierarchy of social duties. It is the affirmation of the family life. We should however be overstepping the limits if we saw in the respect here enjoined any analogy to the piety demanded by the Decalogue in the service of God. The divine right of parents as upheld by Greek Paganism, which calls them *δευτεροι καὶ ἐπίγαιοι θεοί*, or in Menander's words, *θεῶν εἰκόνες βεβαίωταται*, for whom Aristotle claims *τιμὴν καθάπερ θεοῖς*, is a notion stained with idolatry and produced by the confusion of the divine with the human. The religion of the Old Testament makes an absolute distinction between these two spheres and makes not the least confusion between the filial duty and the ser-

<sup>1</sup> *Rom. i. 28.*

<sup>2</sup> *John vii. 17.*

vice of God. The bond between parents and children is in its view purely natural ; and if the respect due to it is here given so much prominence, it is because that bond lies at the root of all a man's relations with his fellow-creatures.

Now the national character of the moral commandments of the Decalogue inevitably emphasized this importance. Israel, the chosen people, the witness of Jehovah, is truly one single family. From the days of Abraham, the father of the people, the promises have been handed down, like a sacred inheritance, from generation to generation ; so that the loyalty of son to father ascends through Abraham up to God, and, in the sphere of religion, appears as loyalty to the sworn covenant,<sup>1</sup> while it gives to the rising generations a keen sense of the solidarity which unites all Israelites. It is at the father's hearth that the child awakes to social life, becomes conscious of an authority higher than his own, opens his heart to brotherly love, and learns that no one here below lives entirely to himself, but that the peace, welfare and happiness of the family depend first and foremost on a mutual love which makes each the servant of all and all the servants of each. It is by means of the family that the child, brought up in the spirit of his forefathers, enters into the community and becomes a member of that larger family, the nation. What he was in the family he will be in the state, for the first relations of his moral life contained the germ of all the rest. In no other state was it as important as it was in Israel, that each citizen should be moulded in his family according to the inherited patterns of the common ancestor. And so the first of the laws on which the national life depended was rightly and properly : " Honour thy father and thy mother."

vi. PERSONAL SECURITY IN THE KINGDOM OF  
JEHOVAH.

THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER.

The first condition of the moral and social life of the Israelite nation was laid down in the fifth commandment.

<sup>1</sup> The covenant is to be continued from father to son. *Gen.* xvii. 9, xviii. 19.

We might call it the family spirit. But it is not enough to found and build up; we must also preserve. Now, as a nation is made up of individuals, murder is an attack upon the life of the nation. The crime covered by the sixth commandment goes beyond ordinary murder. In Israel, to kill is not only to deprive a being of his supreme good; it is to destroy, in the person of your neighbour, the chosen nation, the sworn covenant, and the work and hopes of Jehovah. Later on, when the ministry of the Prophets crowned by the work of Jesus Christ had taught Israel that Jehovah is the God of all men, that the kingdom of the elect reaches to the ends of the earth and that every man, by the mere fact of being a man, bears the seal of individuality because the love of God encompasses him, then the commandment "Thou shalt do no murder" was allowed its full force and its broad human meaning. But for the time being the nation only was in view. We stand here at the first stage of the education of conscience. The aim of Revelation was to teach the Israelite, by setting him in a sufficiently circumscribed field for him to grasp, so to speak, the working of the divine mind, that when in a fit of selfish violence he struck his neighbour, the blow was really dealt at himself and at God.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

These two commandments, closely allied to the last and of the same kind, call before us the two other classes of acts by which the Israelite, in depriving his neighbour of what belongs to him might labour to satisfy his own instincts, *to realize his individual "ego" at the expense of the community*. Now the community, or nation, is the object of the divine election. In it and through it God declares Himself and works for the salvation of humanity. Therefore, to realize one's own "ego" at the expense of the community is to put an obstacle in the way of God's plan; not merely to refuse allegiance to the will of God, but to work against God and set one's own EGO against God. This is sin. But as the guilty Israelite is a part of the nation, and therefore his dearest interests are identical with the nation's, when he works to satisfy himself



to the detriment of the nation, he works in reality against his own interests, and against himself, and contradicts himself. That is the fruit and the wages of sin. The eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," needs no explanation. Its aim is to establish the reign of confidence, so as to allow of "co-operation," a term which would not have such a modern ring if Israel had been faithful to the institutions of Moses, for co-operation is the very essence of social organization. The seventh commandment, generally interpreted in the light of the Gospel (which considerably enriches its meaning) must, to be properly understood, be restored to its historical setting. The words "Thou shalt not commit adultery" do not extend (as might be supposed from the rendering "Thou shalt not commit any impurity") to all forms of sensuality. Even conjugal fidelity itself is not directly thought of. In those days marriage was free, and a man could multiply his wives and concubines, provided he did not overstep the bounds of his lawful possessions. The wife belonged to a man, as we see from the tenth commandment, which enumerates the house, wife, servant, ox and ass among the things belonging to the neighbour. It was only much later, when the Prophets' preaching had revealed the wife's proper place from the religious point of view, and compared the covenant of God with His people to the union of husband and wife, that marriage, raised again from its degradation, acquired gradually the dignity and sanctity with which we see it invested in the Gospel. In the Mosaic teaching, to commit adultery means simply to have intercourse with a woman belonging to another, in other words, to satisfy one's own instincts to the detriment of the community.

vii. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE KINGDOM OF  
JEHOVAH.

The last two commandments bring us face to face with sins whose authors hide themselves and attack the life and welfare of the community only in isolated acts committed in the dark, at the instigation of a particular lust. Their fault only indirectly affects society, the attack being aimed

solely at the individual. But a man directly threatens the life of society when he attacks its institutions, revolts and betrays them in the interests of his personal satisfaction. Then it is no longer only his neighbour, but the whole community which he sacrifices to his criminal selfishness, whether he keep up appearances by a pretended obedience to the law or openly and violently trample on national customs and private liberties. The ninth commandment has provided for the former case, and the tenth for the latter.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS.

The expression here used, "false witness," does not refer to lying in general, as the Gospel interpretation readily admits. It aims solely at that special form of falsehood which consists in hindering the course of justice by false allegations (cf. *Levit.* v. 1). If once the course of justice be obstructed, what guarantee remains for the goods and lives of the citizens? The national institutions are undermined at the foundations; and the existence of all is menaced by the conduct of each. The Decalogue, in the ninth commandment, does not encroach on the domain of jurisprudence, but just touches on it and, keeping its position on moral ground, commands every Hebrew to respect by his conduct the rights of his fellow-citizens. But if the false witness, by hindering so far as in him lies the course of justice, menaces the national institutions and social security, the man whose unbridled selfishness recognizes no respect for man nor even the ordinary forms of justice, and who seeks the satisfaction of his appetite through violence, that man, so far as in him lies, throws back civilization into barbarism, is the foe of everything outside himself and annihilates the nation. Against him it is that the tenth commandment is pronounced.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET.

In the priestly version of the Decalogue, the tenth commandment appears as "Thou shalt not oppress thy

neighbour, nor rob him.”<sup>1</sup> This interpretation may seem overstrained to those who habitually read the Decalogue in the light of the Gospel, and who would compare the people to whom it was given with the Christian Church trained through the centuries by the teaching of Christ to distinguish between an act and a thought and to condemn the evil thought itself as a sin. But to assume such a distinction among the Hebrews of Moses’ time and to expect from the Decalogue a condemnation like that of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, would show a grave misunderstanding of the growth of the Hebrew conscience. That the word *chamad*, “to covet,” signifies not only the inward feeling but the spring of the lust to seize upon its object, is sufficiently proved by the use of the term in *Ex.* xxxiv. 24, *Deut.* vii. 25, *Mic.* ii. 2, etc. When Jesus, enumerating the laws of the second table to the young man of great possessions translates *loh-tachmod* by *μὴ ἀποστερήσης* (*Mark* x. 19), He makes it clear that the covetousness mentioned is not only an internal impulse, but an act by which another’s right is violated.

Such is the body of laws which all Hebrew literature attributes to the meeting of Jehovah and Moses on Mount Sinai. The Law was destined to serve as the charter of the Kingdom of Jehovah and to enable the chosen people to realize as a nation, in an elementary way, the threefold wish of the Lord’s prayer: “Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be *Thy name, Thy Kingdom* come, Thy will be done *on earth. . .*” Since its promulgation in the 14th century B.C. the Decalogue has not been surpassed or superseded by any legislation human or divine. The commandments are expressed in the negative, and in this way are a fit expression of a new and superior will intervening in a condition of affairs in which thoughts and habits are evil, opposing and contradicting them, and declaring to sinful humanity, as represented in the tribes of Israel, that the first condition of man’s return into favour is a change of conduct and a renunciation of all that he has always done. It is equally clear that these negative commandments cannot be

<sup>1</sup> *Levit.* xix. 13. Cf. Westphal, *Sources du Pentateuque*, vol. i. p. 304; compare St. Paul’s interpretation with that given by Jesus. (*Rom.* vii. 7; *Mark* x. 19.)

realized in their spirit, unless a new positive and active feeling disposes the heart to understand, accept and fulfil them. This feeling is expressed in two commandments which ancient texts have set in very close relation with the Decalogue and which Jesus quotes in the Gospel, calling them the summary of the whole Law. And this they truly are, for they contain the whole principle of its practice :<sup>1</sup>

"THOU SHALT LOVE JEHOVAH, THY ELOHIM, WITH ALL THY HEART, WITH ALL THY STRENGTH, WITH ALL THY MIND.

THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF."

Unquestionably, the God whom men must worship with all their hearts claims this love only as being the Elohim of Israel, and the neighbour whom men must love as themselves means at first simply the fellow-citizen. But if the Israelite will set himself to keep the commandments of the Decalogue, the progressive education of his conscience will widen the scope of his duties. The God Whom he loves will appear more and more clearly as the Lord on Whom all creation depends, and, beyond the Israelite neighbour, his love will extend to other men, to the weak, and the wretched, nay even to the animals which help him in his toil, and to the whole of nature which, like the heavens, declares the glory of the Creator. This extension of these altruistic feelings was made easier by a whole series of precepts which we find in the ancient code and which show the thoroughly humanitarian character of Moses' social notions. The rigorous and minute precepts of the priestly ritual, with their constant repetition of the decree of death against all transgressors of the ceremonial, give the reader the impression that he is dealing with a savage God, and a pitiless lawgiver, and that the Law promulgated amid the crash of thunder shares the character of those storm-flashes which lighten but to blast. If we possessed only those texts, we should have some difficulty in understanding how Jehovah expected love from His people, or how Moses left behind him the reputation of being of all men the most patient and most meek. But if we confine ourselves to the texts anterior

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Deut.* vi. 5 ; *Mat.* xxii. 37 ; *Mark* xii. 30 ; *Luke* x. 27.

to the Priestly Code, the aspect of the religion as a whole is altered and Jehovah wears a different countenance. In spite of the fearful penalties pronounced against the transgressors of the moral law and the enemies of God's people, the refrain which sounds in our ears is no longer the word *Death*, but much rather *Life*. Jehovah is the Life-God, He desires life for all creation, and it is for the work of life that He has chosen Himself on earth a people which is His family by adoption; and, as fatherhood implies the communication of life, the relations of God with Israel are all destined to produce, develop and multiply life. Thus it is that in the institutions of Moses we see not merely a succession of ritual precepts, to break which is death, but moral ordinances all aimed and directed towards life. First we have the Decalogue, which is the charter of religious, moral and social life, then the law of love, in which the heart is to find the very springs of life, and lastly, humanitarian commandments intended to place under Israel's protection strangers, outcasts, slaves, animals, trees and the whole of nature.<sup>1</sup> Nothing was better fitted than commandments of this kind to break through the narrow setting in which the religion of Israel at first shut itself up and to transform an exclusive into a universal system of morality.

### C. THE JEHOVIST WORSHIP IN ITS PRIMITIVE FORM.

The outward forms of worship in Moses' time were as elementary and transitory as his religious and moral institutions were complete and eternal. Given the people and the situation, it could scarcely have been otherwise. The desert had its limitations. But it seems besides that Jehovah and His Prophet were anxious at the outset to avoid as far as possible institutions which tend to formalism, materialize moral commandments and revive the notion of an *opus operatum*. Everything is organized very simply, and in a way to keep alive in the Israelite the feelings of humanity, spiritual dependence and faith.

<sup>1</sup> *Exod.* xxii. 21, xxiii. 9; *Deut.* xxiv. 4; *Exod.* xxii. 24; *Deut.* xxiv. 14; *Exod.* xxxiv. 26; *Deut.* xxii. 6, xxv. 4, xxi. 19. See Appendix I. Moses and Hammurabi, and cf. p. 84 above.

I. *The Altar*.—The Prophetic Tradition at the close of the Decalogue continues as follows :

“An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen : in every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee. And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones : for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.”<sup>1</sup>

The earliest Hebrew legislation contains not a word more on the subject of religious worship. Where is the sanctuary ? Everywhere. To make the place holy, it is enough if Jehovah, invoked by His people, “glorifies His name,” either by a theophany such as that which made Jacob exclaim, “This is none other but the house of God,” or by the simple answering of a prayer, revealing the presence of the Almighty : “I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.” There is no talk of a fixed site, nor of a single sanctuary for sacrifice. Nor is this to be wondered at. The people live from hand to mouth, with scarce enough for their daily needs. They march, encamp, pitching their tents every evening and striking them in the morning, for ever kept on the alert by the difficulties of the road and the perils of war. One day they are gathered in a body ; the next they are dispersed over hill and dale. Besides they are rustic, their ways of life rough, their notions elementary, their conscience only half awake, and they are not above setting up a golden calf at the very foot of Sinai. All that Jehovah asks of them is to remember that He is their God. An altar of earth, erected on the road and on which the head of the family or tribe offers up his burnt-offering as he passes, that is all-sufficient. If they prefer, or if the nature of the soil makes it more convenient, they may make their altar of unhewn stones. But what a sudden flight have we here towards the highest conception of the divine holiness ! In reference to chisel and trowel, what a flood of light is cast on the true position, in relation to God, of natural man, who pollutes all that he touches and can-

<sup>1</sup> *Exod.* xxiv. 26.

not save from desecration even what he makes for God ! Nowhere else in the Bible do we find this truth expressed more forcibly than here, on the threshold of the Mosaic legislation, in the bold contrast presented by this rudimentary service and the absolute holiness of the God Who is content with it.

II. *The Tent of Meeting*.—The real sanctuary under Moses was called the Tent of Meeting. It was a tabernacle of perfectly simple design, an open tent pitched outside the camp. There was no ceremonial in the service and no Levite attached. Moses' servant Joshua had sole charge of it. But if this tabernacle was free from all ritual, the religion, of which it was the centre, was alive and intensely spiritual. In it was continued the intercourse which began on Mount Sinai, in it Moses spoke to Jehovah as a friend to his friend, in it the patriot-prophet in glowing entreaties pleaded for his rebellious people against the wrath of Jehovah, and there lastly in his solitary meditations he learnt to discern the plan of God and His intentions towards Israel. The Prophetic Tradition, speaking of this sanctuary where God, day by day, was perfecting the education of His messenger, has preserved, in a naive but suggestive form, the memory of all the anxieties which perpetually carried back the fervent soul of Moses towards God. For instance, the episode of Moses beseeching his God to accompany him in his stern mission and asking Jehovah for a material proof of His presence: "Shew me, I pray Thee, Thy glory." Jehovah's reply teaches us that whoever wishes to know Him must seek Him, not in any dazzling and impressive vision, nor in any bewildering external prodigy, but in the secret depths of the heart, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee," and in an attentive observation of the way in which Providence asserts itself and reveals the presence and intentions of God, "Thou shalt see my back." The religion inaugurated by Moses was very slow in winning the soul of his people. Among the Israelites who during the long wanderings in the desert came daily before the Tent of Meeting to know Jehovah's will and receive Moses' instruction, who knows how many grasped the true meaning of

the teachings of their God? Their coarse misconceptions and perpetual backslidings are sufficient proof that at no period of their history were the true worshippers very numerous. But the fact remains that from the very outset, the proper course of the worship *in spirit* was admirably mapped out. The Tent of Meeting and the altar of unhewn stones are marvellously suited to the demands of the religion of the Decalogue and the Law of Love. The worship and the law combine to evoke in the Israelite's still dark and carnal soul the piety due to the God Who "looketh on the heart."

III. *The Ark of the Covenant.*—Lastly, there is an institution which appears to date from the time of Moses and which, though not directly a part of the worship, nevertheless had a great influence on the religion of Israel. Jehovah had forbidden His people to materialize His worship by graven images. He had said to Moses: "Man shall not see me and live" (*Ex. xxxiii. 28*). But He wished that, through all the chance and change of their wandering life, the Israelites might have with them, to remind them of His presence and reproach them for their disloyalty, an irrefutable and permanent witness of the divine will and the covenant concluded at Sinai. This witness was the Tables of stone, carried in the Ark of the Covenant, which was a simple portable coffer of acacia-wood. There was no rite, no symbol, no material representation or ceremony which might lead to formalism, but, from the very first, God's presence in His Word. Thus, by naive and rudimentary forms, the religion of the desert inaugurated the essential conditions of the worship *in spirit and truth*. That worship and the law on which it is based, together constituted the revelation of *Jehovism*, which revelation was destined to bring about a revolution in the religious notions of humanity. There were now two religions in the world: the religion of *Elohim*, or the natural religion of humanity, and the religion of *Jehovah*, revealed to the Prophets of Israel.

What then was the difference between these two religions, and what was the specific character of each?

*Elohism*, the religion of humanity, everywhere and always



shows us man seeking God. *Jehovism*, the religion of the Prophets, everywhere and always shows us God seeking man. In the religion of humanity, God is made in the likeness of man. In the religion of the Prophets, man is made in the likeness of God. From these initial contradictions there flow two sharply opposed religions. In the one, that in which man seeks God without ever finding Him, the most generous aspirations and most kindly speculations degenerate into superstitions. God, in the likeness of man, appears in the guise of a chief, a lord, and an almighty master whose protection and goodwill are to be secured by gifts and devotions. He must have a palace, hence the temple; courtiers, hence the priests; a civil list, hence the tithes and all the gifts which load the altars. The service of this Elohim, His worship, consists in paying Him homage, in making Him gifts. And as the life of a man cannot be entirely spent in homage of this kind, the existence of the faithful worshipper of Elohim is always necessarily divided into two parts, one in which he busies himself with the service of his God, and the other in which he attends to his own business. And then we have introduced into the internal and external activity of man the essentially human and pagan distinction between the sacred and the profane. The religion of the Prophets is very different. Consider its source, the call of the first and greatest of the Prophets, Moses. There God seeks man and stops him on his way, by revealing Himself to him under the name of *Jehovah*, the *Life-God*. Add to the declaration in which God reveals His nature, the other which at the opening of *Genesis* reveals the nature of man, "God made man in His own likeness," and you have the whole religion of the Prophets. God is *Life*. Therefore for man, His image, to draw near to God is to live; to drift from Him is to die; to do anything outside God, is to work for empty nothingness; to serve God is to propagate life. The propagation of life becomes his whole worship and religion. Jehovah asks for no homage, devotion, rite or gift. He asks for the heart, because from the heart issue the springs of life. The gift of oneself to become the apostle of life and undertake everywhere a struggle to

the death against death, that is the reasonable service of the faithful servant of Jehovah. The life of the believer is then no longer divided into two parts as in pagan *Elohism*. It is restored to its organic and living unity. There is now nothing sacred or profane, but everywhere, in all the fields of human activity, the apostleship of Life for the glory of Jehovah. "Therefore, choose life, that thou mayest live" (*Deut. xxx. 19*).

Such was the religious revolution brought about by *Jehovism*, and such was the leaven that God put in Israel with which gradually to leaven the whole of humanity. But before such a transformation could penetrate the soul of the chosen people and be realized in actions in accordance with its inspiration, unknown convulsions and bloody catastrophes must attend the divine evolution. However, from the days of Sinai, the principle of true religion was laid down, and true piety was given its proper direction. From that time, all the conflicts, which humbled Israel and the Church, sprang out of some fresh outbreak of *Elohism* in the midst of *Jehovism*, in other words, in a revolt of the natural heart against the religion whose aim is precisely to break and convert that selfish rebellious heart and to give it back to God. That is how the history of both the Covenants shows us through the course of centuries the periods of religious torpor marked by a recrudescence of materialistic ritualism and the times of revival marked by conversions and a return of spiritual obedience to the Word of God.

#### *Section 5. The Prophet of the Wilderness.*

The history of Israel teems with contrasts. One of the most violent and unexpected is the erection of the golden calf at the very foot of Sinai. This dramatic scene, following on the heels of the Decalogue, is highly instructive. The part played by Aaron shows how little Moses' brother had shared the mighty Prophet's thoughts and how foreign the spirituality of *Jehovism* was to him. He offers no resistance to the crowd, but readily becomes their accomplice: for is not the people's demand in no way a desertion of the ancestral Elohim? If they ask for a metal idol, it is not to put it in

Jehovah's place, or substitute one god for another. No, the idol, like all those symbols of the deity in Egypt, is intended precisely to represent Jehovah. It is made in Jehovah's honour, and when Aaron, after making the golden calf, builds an altar to it and invites Israel to sacred dances, he fully intends to assume the position and rôle of the priest of Jehovah.

Thus arose, on the very day of the covenant, the conflict between priest and Prophet. The Prophet came down from the mountain to establish spiritual worship, and brought with him the law founding religion on morality and making Israel the heir and dispenser of the word of Life. The priest without any evil intention, but without the capacity to rise to the spirituality of the true religion, establishes in the plain, together with the crowd whose prejudices he shares and whose resentment he fears, a materialistic and ritualistic worship which drags Israel back into the groove of natural religion and lowers Jehovah to the position of an Elohim. Had the tendency personified in Aaron triumphed, *Jehovism* would have been doomed. For the essentially moral and spiritual religion, whose foundations Moses was commissioned to lay, and which was to prepare the way for the preaching of the Prophets and the redemption by Jesus Christ, there would have been substituted a religion like any other, in which ritual and material observances would have taken the place of piety in the heart, and wickedness and hardness of heart would in no way have been excluded by formalism and merely external devotion. Moses' anger at the sight of the golden calf was natural. The whole plan of his God was being destroyed at a stroke. He appealed to all those who wished to remain faithful to the words of Jehovah and were ready to risk their lives to avenge the outrage. The Levites, who were the members of his own family, responded to the call.<sup>1</sup> They took up their swords, and it was a bloody day, thoroughly

<sup>1</sup> In this proof of loyalty which saved *Jehovism*, and in the fact that the Levites were Moses' tribe, we may see the historical origin of the priestly investiture which in the course of time made *priest* and *Levite* synonymous terms. It is probable that Moses eventually entrusted the Tent of Meeting and the Ark of the Covenant to the keeping of the faithful Levites, and that thus the Levites continued from father to son as the guardians of the sanctuary and controllers of worship.

worthy of that barbarous age, but in which we may yet see the first application of the principle afterwards laid down by Jesus: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."<sup>1</sup>

After this terrible chastisement, which made Israel feel for the first time how much the divine road where Jehovah bade them walk differed from that of the material inclinations of the human heart, Moses plunged into the desert and struck out for the Promised Land. He had chosen as his guide his brother-in-law Hobab, a Midianitish Bedouin familiar with the desert and used to the customs of caravan life. With such a guide and the little resistance which Israel encountered on their way, it would have been quite easy to cover in a few months the two hundred miles separating Sinai from Hebron or Jericho. But it was not enough merely to reach the goal. It was essential that Israel should meet all attempts to crush it with a triumphant power of resistance and the invincible onset of a compact mass of inspired crusaders. Such political cohesion and religious enthusiasm could only be formed in the wilderness, and the process occupied forty years. We know little of this long period of training. The episodes handed down by tradition, if pieced together, would scarcely fill a few weeks. But in the general trend of the painful education the action of Providence is very evident. Moses' apostleship stands out in incomparable beauty, and in spite of the incessant relapses of the tribes all through their pilgrimage, by the time that the Jordan is reached, the work of education is complete. Moses can withdraw. In the apparent confusion and darkness, an idea has sprung up, that of the right of Jehovah, the foundation of all the religion, all the morality, and all the social polity of Israel.

The narratives of the period require no explanation, only the fate of Moses and his death on the near side of Jordan

<sup>1</sup> *Matt. x. 37.* Probably *Deut. xxxiii. 9* is an echo of this heroic act:

Who [Levi] said of his father and of his mother, I have not seen him;  
Neither did he acknowledge his brethren,  
Nor knew he his own children:  
For they have observed thy word,  
And keep thy covenant.

are still wrapped in obscurity. The verse which treats his end as a punishment belongs to a later source than that which makes Moses declare positively that it is because of the people that Jehovah prefers not to lay the burden of conquest upon his shoulders.<sup>1</sup> In any case, the career of the founder of Israel closes with an act of self-denial. The grand scene which shows us Moses resigning his power to Joshua and withdrawing into the mountains to die alone with God, adds a peculiarly pathetic touch to the life of the old warrior, whose indomitable heart had had but one purpose: to make Jehovah King. His ancestor Joseph had made a king into the god of his vassals: Moses makes his God into Israel's king. The former put the whole of Egypt into one man's hands, the latter gave all to Jehovah and founded the Theocracy. Though brought up in Egyptian theology, whose one thought was to secure to the living a good place in the heavenly Paradise, Moses held out to his people no promise of anything beyond this earth so long as on the earth the will of Jehovah was unfulfilled. Though he was brought up in a royal environment which promised him a pyramid for his monument, he contrived to die in such a way that his tomb might remain undiscovered, and that his death itself might be a last sign to his people pointing them to Jehovah.

Moses, the founder of *Jehovism*. So he is not the hierophant of Rabbinical tradition, the lawgiver immersed in minutiae and exhausting his genius in elaborating the Temple ritual, the pomp of ceremonial, the liturgy of the priests and the service of the altar. Nor is he the legendary hero or the great patriot of modern criticism, entirely engrossed in the earthly welfare of his people and using a religion invented by himself to establish discipline among them. No, he is the inspired Prophet, filling on the threshold of the Preparatory Covenant the same unique position that Jesus Christ filled on the threshold of the Final Covenant. He is the apostle through whom the religion of Jehovah became the inalienable heritage of Israel and through whom Israel became the foundation of the kingdom of God on earth. No doubt, the documents show us what trouble Moses had to accomplish his

<sup>1</sup> *Num.* xx. 12 belongs to the Priestly Tradition. Cf. *Deut.* iii. 23, iv. 21.

task, to make himself understood and obeyed. But the very revolts of the people of Israel are a proof of his power, since his work withstood the most determined assaults, and the religion he founded lasted intact as a national religion to the time of the Prophets. His greatness is shown in this, that he was not content with giving precepts to his people, but communicated to Israel the religious spirit which animated him. The spirit of Moses passed into the Hebrew soul ; and thanks to this, the Jewish nation brought by the spirit of Moses into a unique relation with God, became, in spite of all its misfortunes, the centre of genuine worship, the trustee of the divine promises, the educator of universal religion, and the herald of salvation, eternal truth and the moral liberation of humanity.

## CHAPTER II.

### JOSHUA.

JOSHUA TAKES THE LEAD—JOSH. I. II. FIRST VICTORIES—JOSH. VI.-VIII. BATTLE OF GIBEON—JOSH. IX. X. JOSHUA'S FAREWELL—JOSH. XXIV.

#### *Section I. The Man and his Task.*

BEFORE entering on the history of the chief events of the Conquest, some explanations are necessary. In the first place, what are we to think of the historical value of the book which bears the name of Joshua? Criticism is very hard upon it. It is allowed to have been derived from the same sources, on the whole, as the books of the Pentateuch, whose narratives it continues. But the final compiler's hand is here so much more clearly visible, and the framework of history has been so thoroughly disguised by the brilliant drapery of poetry, that more than one learned historian refuses any credence to these pages abounding in impossibilities and contradictions. In their view, the conquest of Canaan was effected quite differently from the traditional account, and Joshua himself was an imaginary hero. Once again, the truth here must be sought somewhere between the credulity which accepts everything unquestioningly, and the scepticism which suppresses history under the pretence of purging it of romance. It is clear that many of the accounts relating to the conquest of Canaan have reached us in a form in which the action of Providence is permeated with the miraculous. The crossing of Jordan, with its waves standing up, recalls the priestly version of the crossing of the Red Sea. The capture of Jericho, with its walls falling flat at the sound of

the sacred trumpet, introduces into the story priestly institutions which at that time did not yet exist.<sup>1</sup> And the narrator of the battle of Gibeon, imagining that Joshua stopped the sun, takes as a material fact what in the primitive text is but a poetical invocation. These are simply signs that we are dealing with late traditions, in which historical fact has already been amplified by popular imagination and sacerdotal apologetics. Nor can we accept as historical the general framework of the *Book of Joshua*, when it unrolls the drama of the conquest as a triumphal progress right up to the complete possession of the Promised Land, which had been divided beforehand among the twelve tribes of Israel. The grand conception will not stand before the facts; for the Books of *Judges* and of *Samuel* prove that in reality the conquerors took several centuries to perform their task, which was completed only by King David. Besides, directly he approaches the details, the historian is disconcerted by their contradictions and omissions. Campaigns are attributed in one place to Joshua, in another to his successors.<sup>2</sup> To give thanks for the capture of Ai, Joshua is supposed to have ascended Mount Ebal, which is very far from that city and separated from it by a line of fortified places, such as Ophrah, Shiloh, Shechem, etc., whose capture is not mentioned. Lastly, the figures quoted in the *Book of Joshua* do not seem any more reliable than the bulk of the chronologies and numberings connected with the history of Israel previous to the reign of Solomon. Take, for instance, one of the completest and best composed accounts, that of the capture of Ai. Joshua without any difficulty places behind a city of 12,000 inhabitants an ambush of 30,000 men (elsewhere reckoned at 5000), and himself, with the bulk of his forces, has recourse to cunning strategy to overcome an enemy who could scarcely put into the field three or four thousand men in all. The cunning manœuvre is quite intelligible, but only at the cost of sacrificing the figures, which are improbability itself. Having said so much, to show how cautiously we must proceed in

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* the priests' trumpets (cf. *Num.* v. 9; *Josh.* vi. 19, etc.) and the treasure of the House of God.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Judges* i. and the conquests of Joshua.



the reconstruction of those far-off scenes, must we conclude, as others have done, that in the *Book of Joshua* history has yielded the field to fiction? Such a course would be as unscientific as the opposite one of taking all the accounts as literally true. An attentive examination and comparison of the earliest authorities establishes perfectly clearly the historical reality of Joshua, allows us to trace the general movements of his campaign, and shows beyond all dispute that he was the agent of God to put the chosen people in possession of the Promised Land.

But there is a last, thoroughly modern, objection, not this time against the authenticity of the man, but against his work. For instance we read in a very modern Bible History for Schools: "Conquests are always abominable, and we censure the conquest of Canaan with the rest." If this summary condemnation be justified, it only remains for us to blot out of our Bible Histories the Call of Abraham, the apostleship of Moses in the desert, and the very words '*Promised Land*.' These things have no meaning, and we must declare unmistakably that the settlement of the ancestors of Jesus Christ in Palestine was due to a bold and lucky stroke on the part of wandering adventurers. But we are not prepared to accept a verdict which seems to us to sacrifice one of the general principles of God's government of the world to the very modern cry of universal disarmament. Certainly, war is a child of the Fall. It is wicked and human. It is no better than humanity. This does not prevent God from using humanity and the institutions of a world sunk in evil, to bring good out of evil and make all things work together for the good of those who love Him. Disease, calamity, death itself, guided by His redeeming will, became, from the beginning of the preparatory Covenant, ministers of His merciful intentions. To question this truth is to discredit the whole Prophetic theology. Since Jesus came to earth to inaugurate a spiritual humanity which should be mistress of its own destinies and conscious of true brotherly love, God, in the Christian world, no longer admits war. He merely endures it. But before the age of the Gospel, it appears to me not at all a matter for surprise

that Jehovah Zebaoth, the Lord of Hosts, conforming to the barbarous times of the Amalekite and the Amorite, disposed through war of a province of His empire for the sake of setting in the centre of three continents, on the shores of the Mediterranean, the cradle of Redemption. When He directs a battle, it is not to make His divine power the accomplice of the right of the stronger, but to execute His judgements, to accustom humanity to associate the idea of life with that of progress and the idea of death with that of decadence, and to eliminate the causes of dissolution from the world. There is a law for bodies of men as for individuals, and Providence maintains its rights in both cases.

Therefore my faith in the justice of Jehovah, so far from being alarmed, is filled with wonder when it contemplates that corner of the world selected by God to be, as it were, a fiery furnace for the refining of the moral conscience of man. Providence is there at work, now subjecting to the *Jehovist* tribes the followers of Baal and Ashtoreth ; now by means of the Assyrians breaking the faithless sceptre of Israel and Judah ; now through Cyrus' victory over Babylon restoring the Jewish exiles to the Saviour's cradle, and, finally, sending the Roman eagles to devastate those spots which had witnessed so many signs of divine favour and were stained with the inexpressible crime of the crucifixion of the Son of God. All that the modern conscience has a right to claim is that the history of Providential intervention should not attribute to Jehovah commandments tending to exaggerate barbarity, from which it was His aim and object to wean mankind. This would apply to the custom of "utter destruction" or "*herem*," which means "consecration to God by death." In this connexion, all Christians will be glad to learn that this savage law of extermination, so long represented as peculiar to the Old Testament and necessitated by the holiness of its God, was in reality a political and religious custom of the Canaanitish tribes in the midst of which Israel came to settle. To clear the world before him, exterminate his enemies and drag the statues of the vanquished gods before his face, was the acknowledged way to honour Baal. Scientifically therefore we are justified, and from the religious



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point of view we are bound, to regard this barbarous mode of securing a conquest not as a *Jehovist* law, but as a pagan custom which the misguided Israelites had thought themselves obliged to adopt in order to secure their possessions and honour the worship of their Elohim.<sup>1</sup>

*Section 2. The Conquest of Canaan.*

Moses had been sent to found and organize the people of God. Joshua, his servant and disciple, was entrusted with the creation of a body of crusaders for the holy war and with their lead in the struggle which was to put Israel in possession of their inheritance. Joshua could claim neither the breadth of Moses nor the religious genius of Samuel; he reminds us rather of David by his military qualities, his unshakable faith in the help of Jehovah, and his lack of reliance on the loyalty of the tribes which he was leading on to victory. He set to work courageously, trusting to God more than man, and his chequered career shows us in the midst of perils a constancy of courage and faith which was the cause of his success.

Joshua's political work, according to the certain data of the book relating it, may be confined to four campaigns, those of Jericho, Ai, Gibeon and Lake Merom.

<sup>1</sup> The original instructions solemnly given by Jehovah to Moses are to be found in *Exod.* xxxiv. 5-15. There is no question there of *extermination*, but only of *expulsion* of corrupt and idolatrous tribes. "*I drive out* before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, etc." Later, God says to Joshua, "Then shall not any man be able to stand before thee . . . only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee." That law was "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land . . . but ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars." (*Exod.* xxxiv. 12, 13.)

Thus, by their systematic massacres, their alliances with the natives and their worship of the local gods, the conquerors did the exact opposite of their original instructions. Moses, like all the pioneers of the divine revelation, was in advance of his age.

"Joshua and the Israel of his day belong to the preparatory phase in which the conscience must and does learn to have a horror of evil, but does not as yet discriminate between the sinner and the sin, between injustice and the misguided man who commits it. It has still to find by experience that God is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil' (*Hab.* i. 13), but has 'no pleasure in the death of the wicked' (*Ezek.* xviii. 23, 32, xxxii. 11)."

*First Campaign : Jericho.*<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after Moses' death, Joshua assumed the lead, crossed the Jordan and pitched his permanent camp at Gilgal on the right bank of the river. Jericho, the city of palms, stood before him; and it was by the siege of this place, which was the key of the country, that he opened his campaigns. The capture of Jericho is the most popular of all Joshua's exploits. And yet it is the one about which we should be most cautious, for the narrative is composed of two accounts, one very ancient, which knows nothing beyond Joshua and the people, a silent invasion and a sudden storming and capture of the town, and another which introduces into the story the sacred procession, the priests, the Ark of the Covenant and the portentous crumbling of the walls at the sound of the trumpets. What were the real facts of this bold stroke? Whether there really was a religious demonstration around the walls to divert attention from the siege operations, or whether Jehovah in this first stage of the forward march intervened with miraculous aid, we are no longer in a position to say. All those, therefore, who are anxious to teach nothing but what is certain will be well advised not to lay stress on the details of this campaign. One thing only we can be sure of, that it remained indelibly impressed on the memory of Israel as the type of the wars in which Jehovah Zebaoth worked with His people and the victory was won by a display of faith.

*Second Campaign : Ai.*<sup>2</sup>

The fall of Jericho had cleared a way, and the land lay open to the invader. It was then that the double expedition in which the two most important tribes, Judah and Ephraim, took the lead, was planned in the camp at Gilgal. Judah, assisted by what still remained of Simeon and Levi, went south and seized the south of Palestine. Ephraim, the tribe of the commander-in-chief Joshua, led the remaining tribes northwards and won for Israel all the right bank of the Jordan, from Jericho to Mount Ebal. In this way Shechem

<sup>1</sup>Joshua vi.<sup>2</sup>Joshua vii. 2, viii. 3-35.

became the inheritance of the sons of Joseph,<sup>1</sup> and the Ark of the Covenant with the Tent of meeting which served as its shelter, rested at Bethel and later at Shiloh, the sanctuary of the house of Joshua.

The event of this period which left the deepest mark on the popular imagination was the capture of Ai, the first fortress in the hill country. This episode, like that of the taking of Bethel and the treatment meted out by the men of Judah to Adoni-bezek, introduces us to the barbarous methods of these campaigns, in which craft, treachery, cruelty and extermination united to strike terror into the whole country.<sup>2</sup> This was called in Israel "the fear of Jehovah." We may well say here, as of the altar of unhewn stones, that man pollutes everything he touches and desecrates even that which he does for God. At the close of this victorious expedition, Joshua held a service of thanksgiving on Mount Ebal. The altar was in accordance with the Mosaic tradition: no tool was lifted on it. The victorious chief built the altar, the Levites appearing as bearers of the Ark, and, as such, being called priests. Joshua, though an Ephraimite, was the principal celebrant. He read the Law. The details of this grand scene prove that, when it was painted, the priestly code of laws did not yet exist.

### *Third Campaign: Gibeon.*<sup>3</sup>

The successes and terrible reprisals of the Israelites shook the Canaanitish populations of the south which had not been touched and decided them to take concerted action. The coalition aimed ostensibly at punishing the Gibeonites, who,

<sup>1</sup> The Priestly Tradition makes Shechem a city of refuge assigned to the Levites. *Joshua* xxi. 21.

<sup>2</sup> The words of Adoni-bezek (*Judges* i. 7) prove that the lords of Canaan were recent conquerors of savage habits. The Hittites (related to the Hyksos), whose lands they had ravaged and whose kings they had mutilated, seem to have held the hegemony of Syria from the third millennium B.C. to the Amorite invasion, towards the 13th century B.C. It was they who round about Hebron and Salem (*Gen.* xiv. 18) had shown hospitality to Abraham and his family. It is interesting to see the Jebusite, when conquered by the Hebrew, acknowledge the justice of Providence: "As I have done, so God hath requited me" (*Judges* i. 7).

<sup>3</sup> *Joshua* ix. (in part), x. 1-11, 15. The verses 12-14 are complementary, after the account of the victory, and are a later addition.

## BATTLE OF GIBEON

to save their own lives, had opened their important city to the conquerors. The Gibeonites sent word to the Israelites in their camp at Gilgal: "Come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites are gathered together against us." The danger was imminent. Till then the Hebrews had been used to the adventures of guerilla warfare, raids and skirmishes, subjugating tribe after tribe, and triumphing over one ambush after another. But this time it was a pitched battle: a great army was coming commanded by five kings, on ground familiar to them and with engines of war superior to those of the Israelites. Joshua possessed only two resources, rapidity of attack and faith in the help of Jehovah. He failed in neither: after a desperate struggle lasting from day-break to night-fall the victory of the Israelites decided the fate of the Promised Land. Poets have celebrated this exploit in heroic verse, in which the great captain takes the heavenly bodies to witness:

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ;  
And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.

The historian who borrows these lines from the *Book of Jashar* composed after the time of David<sup>1</sup> (which proves that he lived himself four or five hundred years after the events he records) would have done better to detect the providential intervention of Jehovah not in the standing still of a heavenly body, but in that fearful hurricane, storm or earthquake, which closed the titanic struggle with the extermination of the enemy. The word *damam*, which is used in the address to the sun and moon, means strictly, to stand with gaping mouth, to be stupefied, to be motionless with amazement. It is therefore probable that the primitive song, composed in honour of the miraculous deliverance, invited the sun to halt, not to lengthen the day, but to show his surprise and wonder. Thus it was by a perfectly explicable misunderstanding that the very natural exclamation<sup>2</sup> "Thou Sun and thou Moon,

<sup>1</sup> The *Book of Jashar* contains David's lament over Saul and Jonathan, 2 *Sam.* i.

<sup>2</sup> Invocations of this kind abound in the Old Testament (e.g. *Is.* i. 2, xlv. 23, xlix. 1; *Ps.* cxiv. 2-8, xcvi. 4, 8, etc.), where the heavens, the sea, the earth, the hills, the stars, etc., are invited to sing or tremble or show some other sign of interest in Jehovah's activity in the world.



stand still with wonder before such a spectacle!" supplied ancient history with its most prodigious miracle and the modern champions of inspiration with their shibboleth of true faith.

A recent critic<sup>1</sup> has taken exception to the campaigns of Joshua and asked why God should have troubled Himself about "some unimportant battle or other" fought under the walls of Gibeon by "two Asiatic tribes." The reply of another<sup>2</sup> is worth quoting: "So God troubled Himself about 'some unimportant battle or other' fought under the walls of Gibeon 'by two Asiatic tribes'! We could understand it, if it had been a question of one of those great revolutions or tremendous battles which have been the turning-points of history and the openings of new eras; such as the battle of Marathon, which decided whether the human race should be bound in the rigid immobility of oriental despotism or enjoy the unfettered expansion of which at that time the Hellenic race was the solitary champion; or again the battle of Poitiers, where perished three hundred thousand Saracens, and which made possible the birth of the modern world, by saving France and Europe from Mahometan invasion. But do you know what the battle of Gibeon really was? The question at issue was this: Was the tribe (a small tribe, I allow,) which should give birth to Christianity, and therefore progress, to be allowed, when newly freed from Egyptian slavery, to be destroyed? Should it be rolled back into the desert, to be merged and lost in the mass of wandering tribes without a history or a future? Or should the seed find a soil where it could be sown and develop and grow up? Where should we be without that battle? The battle of Gibeon is one of the most important in the history of the world, according to the learned historian and liberal theologian, Stanley. What? The battle of Gibeon? Yes, the battle of Gibeon. Perhaps, you did not know of it? That simply proves that Bible history gets less attention than other histories in our education. . . . Bible History is too often left to little children as being much too elementary for adults. When I reflect that for many of us that battle of Gibeon is

<sup>1</sup> F. Buisson.

<sup>2</sup> F. Bovet

still 'some unimportant battle or other,' I wonder whether a reform, and even an *urgent reform*, be not needed in the teaching of Bible History, not only in our primary but in our higher education."

*Last Campaign: Lake Merom.*<sup>1</sup>

The decisive victory over the Amorites at Gibeon exposed the states which had fancied themselves secure behind the mountainous regions of northern Palestine. At the instigation of Jabin, king of Hazor, a coalition was formed which appealed to all those who wished to make a supreme effort to thrust back the invader. But the rapidity of Joshua's marches once more foiled the enemy's enterprise. Not far from Lake Merom, the allies were taken by surprise, routed and dispersed and the fugitives pursued as far as Sidon.

Such were the chief campaigns successfully conducted by Joshua. Thanks to them, the tribes were able to spread into every part of Palestine. But they were still far from subjugating the whole country, as certain passages would have us suppose, which we have disregarded as belonging to documents which reconstruct history retrospectively and at times quite artificially.

*Section 3. The Division of the Land.*

Joshua's campaigns, according to tradition, lasted seven years. This figure certainly falls short of the truth. The aged chief of Jehovah's armies had earned his rest, but he was oppressed no less with anxiety than with fatigue. The chief provinces of Canaan, it is true, were conquered, and the general outlines drawn. On the left of the Jordan, Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had received their portions from Moses. On the right, the two great tribes of Judah and Ephraim had established themselves victoriously in the south and north, each gathering around itself the weaker and less warlike tribes. The coalition had been rendered harmless in the direction both of the Amorites and of the Phoenician coastline. But the real danger did not lie there. It lay rather in a kind of resignation of the Israelites who were

<sup>1</sup>Joshua xi. 1-10.

not yet possessed of their territory. Weary of the war, distrustful of the support of Ephraim and Judah, whose whole strength was diverted to their political organization, and finding themselves in the midst of Canaanites who were often of the same race and language as themselves, they indolently slipped into treaties with the natives and gradually lost their individuality and religion through reciprocal encroachments and alliances in which Baal had more to gain than Jehovah. Joshua realized the extent of the peril. He convened a general assembly of the tribes at Shiloh,<sup>1</sup> where he had since his last victories fixed his camp and the sanctuary. By speeches, remnants of which are extant, he fired the zeal of the lukewarm tribes and decided them to undertake on their own account the conquest of the provinces which Jehovah meant to distribute to them by lot. Each of the clans interested sent three spies to draw up a plan of the country and prepare a decisive invasion. On their return, Joshua collected all the information and cast lots, and the apportionment was made at Shiloh, before the Tent of meeting. What exactly was each one's portion we cannot know for certain. The division was never so definite as the later calculations of the priestly survey would imply.<sup>2</sup> In those far-off times, when the State did not yet exist, boundaries were neither fixed nor durable, and, as is still the case in those same regions, mixed districts and villages abounded. But if we wish to have a general notion of the respective positions of the tribes in the days of the conquest, we must study the short contemporary epic preserved in our sacred books under the title of the *Blessing of Jacob*.<sup>3</sup> There, in broad outline, are all the elements of the historical facts: the disinheritance of the eldest son, Reuben; the pre-eminence of the two great tribes, Judah and Ephraim; the cruelty of Benjamin, which nearly caused its downfall; the indolence of Issachar, who purchased rest at the cost of dependence. Finally, the fact that Simeon and Levi had no political in-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Joshua* xviii. 1-6, 9, 10, xix. 49, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Particularly in *Joshua* xiii. to xxiii. of which only ch. xviii. appears to preserve passages belonging to the Prophetic Tradition.

<sup>3</sup> *Genesis* xlix.

dividuality and always lived scattered among their brethren, is explained by an early crime which brought those tribes into ill odour with Shechem, the important city of the mountains of Ephraim.

To what epoch must we assign the decidedly ethnical narrative of *Genesis* xxxiv. ? We cannot tell, but it is certain that Simeon and Levi leaned for support on Judah, the rival of Ephraim. Simeon, at first occupying in the extreme south the country round Beer-Sheba, the home of the old patriarchs, was finally absorbed by Edom and Judah. As for Levi, they owed their best days to the building of the sanctuary at Jerusalem. This does not mean that this position was a very brilliant one, for we find *Deuteronomy*, which had become the code of laws of the southern kingdom, reminding men not to forget the Levite in almsgiving. This shows us once again the fictitious nature of the Priestly Tradition, according to which Levi had no province of their own, because the whole of Israel was their province and God raising them above their brethren willed that the whole nation should be tributary to Aaron.

History does not say how the fresh expeditions were carried out. We know only that the great captain who had inspired them had no longer the strength to direct them. Full of years, overcome by his labours, and actuated by the same modesty as Cincinnatus, he acted like the triumphant dictator who left Rome and her laurels to return to his plough. He asked for Timnath-Serah, a hamlet of Ephraim, as a place of retirement, and there ended his life. But there are men whom their destiny will not allow to die in peace. Even in his solitary retreat, Joshua is once more brought to his feet by the news he hears of the tribes. The great federal and theocratic bond is threatened. More or less everywhere, local sanctuaries are corrupting the disloyal conquerors, and Jehovah is no longer the uncontested King of Israel. Then Joshua once more raises his voice. He convenes the great Israelite assembly at Shechem, and there, in a speech which recalls that of Moses in the plains of Moab or that of St. Paul taking leave of the Ephesian elders, Joshua rehearses the whole plan of God. He recapitulates

Jehovah's blessings and Israel's crimes and duties, and gathers all his failing strength to remind the chosen people that all their future and salvation depend on their loyalty to the head of the theocracy, Jehovah their King.<sup>1</sup> The people promise obedience and give the veteran hero of many victories an ovation. Did all their enthusiasm inspire Joshua with confidence in the future? That is not the impression conveyed by the beautiful page of history which describes his leave-taking. He appointed no successor, fearing, it would seem, that his task was impossible and that an heir would inherit only to destroy. His final declaration: "Choose whom ye will serve. . . . As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah," seems to me to express the unshakable faith of the hero, tinged with the shadow of melancholy with which the aged Charlemagne, musing of the Norsemen's ships, murmured: "What will it be after I am gone?"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Joshua* xxiv.

## PART THE FOURTH.

### FAILURE OF THE THEOCRACY.

#### INTRODUCTION.

"HE came unto his own and they that were his own received him not" (*John* i. 11).

This saying, which sums up the attitude of the Jews towards Jesus, their Messiah, admirably suits the Hebrews' attitude to Jehovah, their Elohim; and we shall see the great work of *Jehovism*—like that of Christianity later—begin in contradictions, and grow amid persecutions, and fulfil in advance the motto of Him crucified: "through defeat to victory."<sup>1</sup> Immediately after the death of Joshua, the *Elohist* conception of religion, backed as it was by the traditions of the past, the similarity of foreign cults and above all the natural inclination of the human heart, seemed entirely to overwhelm the religion of Jehovah. In the time of the Judges, the high places, sacrifices, vows and idols restored to honour all the paraphernalia of the suppressed worships, and unchecked caprice brought the people into such difficulties, that, in spite of Samuel's efforts, the weakened theocracy was forced to give way to a monarchy. Jehovah to all appearance was defeated, but in reality His triumph was going to begin; for the monarchy, by reaction, created the Prophets, and the Prophets, gathering up the inheritance of Moses, were going to build the theocracy no longer on the shifting sands of a political community, but on the unshakable foundation of the individual conscience.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *John* xii. 24, 32; *Matt.* xvi. 25; *Phil.* ii. 6-11.

The events which led to the failure of the *Jehovist* theocracy fall naturally into four periods, which we shall study in order :

1. Anarchy in the days of the Judges.
2. Failure of the reformer Samuel.
3. Institution of the Monarchy.
4. The secession of the Ten Tribes.

## CHAPTER I.

### ANARCHY IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES.

THE AGE OF THE JUDGES—JUDGES II. AND XVII. 6. DEBORAH—  
JUDGES V. GIDEON—JUDGES VI.-IX. JEPHTHAH—JUDGES XI.  
DEATH OF SAMSON—JUDGES XVI.

THE *Book of Judges*, whence we shall draw all our information on the heroic age of the Hebrews, may be divided into three unequal parts. The first (chaps. i.-iii. 6) belongs, by the facts recorded and by the style of the writer, to the cycle of the *Book of Joshua*. The last (chaps. xvii.-xxi.) is an appendix containing two narratives, the second of which is of no great historical value. On the other hand, the middle part (chaps. iii. 6-xvi. 30), containing the history of the Judges, shows real evidences of authenticity. No doubt, it deals with the centuries between Joshua and Samuel only in mere fragments and disjointed anecdotes; at times even, as for instance in the biography of Samson, the episodes which it emphasizes are not so much the important events of the hero's life as those which had struck the popular imagination by their quaintness. Such as they are, however, they impress us by the sincerity and harmony of their style. There are scarcely any signs of revision, and none of an apologetic tendency. The whole thing is perfectly natural, and the vividness of the story and the bloom it possessed when transmitted orally in the Homeric cycle of the Hebrews remains as fresh as ever. "The children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and forgot Jehovah, and served Baalim and idols. Therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he sold them" . . . (*Judges*



iii. 7-8). With words like these the sacred historian introduces the biography of the "Judges."

No long time after the age of Moses and Joshua with all its blessings, everything was changed. Israel's prosperity had proved its ruin, and gratitude to Jehovah cooled as fast as the memory of His deliverances grew fainter. The victors settled down among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Phoenicians, Hivites and Jebusites, without any thought of keeping the ordinances of Moses or the federal bond which was the source of all their strength, the theocratic worship of Jehovah the King. They took the idolaters' daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and worshipped the several Elohim of each district and valley. The result was easy to foresee. The disowning of Jehovah meant the destruction of political unity. Now as this unity constituted the strength of the tribes against the dispossessed nations, the desertion of Jehovah must inevitably be followed by an aggressive and triumphant return of the vanquished. Amorites, Ammonites, Moabites and Philistines did not let slip the favourable opportunity but paid back each in turn to the disunited Israelites the injuries they had received from them. Wherever the tribes drew themselves up for battle, "the hand of Jehovah was against them," and their distress was intense. Then from the depth of despair there went up a sigh, the penitent entreaty of some group of believers converted by adversity, raising their suppliant hands to Jehovah. Jehovah, for His children's sake, "returned to His inheritance," He "remembered" them and raised up a man of faith or simply a man of courage, who delivered the oppressed out of the hand of the spoilers. But gratitude and faithfulness never outlived fear; so soon as peace was secured, the Hebrews went back to Baalim, and everything had to be done again from the beginning. This went on for about three hundred years.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Addition of the figures given in *Judges* would make it 410 years. But that figure, which is very problematical, would contradict the number given in *1 Kings* vi. 1, which reckons 480 years from the Exodus to the fourth year of King Solomon's reign. If we allow 300 or 320 years from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel we shall not be far wrong.

The chieftains, who for a time avenged the honour of Jehovah and in the government of the tribes succeeded the "elders" left in power by Joshua, bore the name of *Shophetim*. The name is the same as that of the *Suffetes*, who in classical times were the chief magistrates of the Carthaginians, a people of the same race as the Hebrews. The *Shophet* is found more or less everywhere in Semitic institutions, and his counterpart among the Arabs. The name "Judge" used in the Bible translation is inappropriate, for the *Shophet* is really the very type of the dictator to whom the Bedouins, who dislike dynasties, used to entrust absolute government both civil and military. The title went to the most deserving, to the chieftain who commanded the popular choice by his personal ascendancy, his muscular force or courage in battle. This was the case with the Edomite princes. It is extremely likely that the *Shophetim*, in Israel, formed an unbroken chain, giving the hegemony now to one tribe now to another, but never followed by the whole of the theocratic people, among whom deadly rivalries kept up intestine wars till the time of the accession of David. The memory of many of these men marked out by the secret inspiration of Jehovah must have been lost; others have left no more than a mere name in history, such as Shamgar, Ibzan, Tola, Elon, Abdon, Jaïr and Othniel the Kenite.

Among the exploits attributed to those whose fame remained bright, there are some which tempt us to say that Providence has preserved them for us only to show us to what an extent in those Middle Ages of the Old Testament history the original *Jehovism* had been corrupted. They enhance the patience of God, Who, to prevent the total disappearance of His rebellious people, condescends to accept the services of workers so unworthy. In the stories of Ehud the left-handed, Jephthah and Samson, there is nothing to recall the austere morality or religious tone of spiritual *Jehovism*; everywhere nothing but high places or new moons, vows and human sacrifices, exploitation of images and divining instruments, and all the superstition and hocus-pocus of natural *Elohism*. Jehovah, if worshipped at all, has no greater honour or higher claim than Baal or Moloch. One

Elohim is as good as another ; and that is why the tribes so easily exchange their religion for those of the neighbouring Amorites, Edomites or Moabites. The altars and rites are the same ; there is only the name of the god to be changed. And yet, by the side of Jephthah or Samson, we have Gideon and Deborah. At times, as a flame starts from half-dead embers, the true *Jehovist* faith revives in a cry or prayer : and we dare not say that there is no fire under the ashes, nor show surprise when, after three centuries of darkness, Samuel stands up in Ramah, to kindle the sacred torch of Prophecy.

The first episode which introduces us to the "Judges" is the exploit of Ehud the Benjamite. The Bedouins of Moab, following in the wake of the Hebrew conquerors, had set foot on Amorite land and crossed the ford of Jabbok, and taking advantage of the disorganization of the Israelite tribes, Eglon, king of Moab, had captured Jericho, where he established himself and levied blackmail over the whole territory of Ephraim. Ehud joined the Benjamite envoys carrying tribute to the brigand. On their return, Ehud left the messengers and made his way back to the king's palace, and said, "I have a secret errand unto thee, O King." "Go out," said Eglon to his servants. When the king and the *Shophet* were alone and face to face, in the summer parlour, "I have a message from God unto thee," cried Ehud with the look of one inspired, and, as Eglon rose to hear it, Ehud "put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh and thrust it into his belly." He left the weapon in the wound, and while the courtiers were afraid to go back into the parlour, he escaped by a postern, ran to the Benjamite clans, rallied them, seized the Jordan and massacred the surprised and terrified Moabites. "So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years."

The second adventure (*Judges* iv. and foll.) which imperilled Israel occurred in the north, where Sisera the Amorite could put in the field nine hundred chariots of iron. Invasion was imminent and it was all over with the Israelite tribes unless they met the Amorite coalition with all the combined levies of Jehovah. The appeal came from Issa-

char. A woman, Deborah, raised the alarm, and showed herself at this crisis the Joan of Arc of the Hebrews. Moved by the same spirit which had inspired Joshua on the field of battle, she sent to all the tribes, even beyond Jordan, the order to march for Jehovah. The appeal for help did not meet everywhere with the same enthusiastic response. "Gilead abode in his tents. . . . At the watercourses of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. . . . And Dan, why did he remain in ships? Asher sat still at the haven of the sea, and abode by his creeks." The song of Deborah, one of the oldest and finest monuments of Hebrew literature, shows us in all its savage bitterness the *Jehovist* ardour of this woman who goads Barak into action and under her own leadership brings him the contingents of Ephraim, Issachar and Manasseh to join in the holy war. Zebulun and Benjamin also followed Barak. Jehovah Zebaoth fought for His people; the rain of heaven joined with the overflowing torrents to cripple the murderous chariots;<sup>1</sup> and in the plain of Megiddo, so often made famous by the shock of battle,<sup>2</sup> the Amorites were completely defeated. Sisera fled towards Hazor, and the inhabitants of Meroz helped him to escape. Strangely enough, it was a woman again who dealt him the final blow. Jael, the Kenite, whom Sisera had asked for a drink, murdered him in his sleep. Such was the miserable end of this campaign, in which the Amorites had hoped to wreak their revenge on the Hebrews; it led to their extermination, thanks to the re-awakening of the theocratic spirit and an outburst of national *Jehovism* stimulated by the preaching of a believing and patriotic daughter of Israel. Deborah was looked up to as a "Judge" and prophetess in Israel, but the tribes, after their momentary alarm was passed, followed neither her advice nor her example. Baalim re-appeared everywhere, and the *Jehovist* confederacy was torn by dissension.

At this point Midianite incursions revived the Israelites' faith. The great prosperity of Manasseh had tempted them to cross Jordan and spread above the possessions of Ephraim

<sup>1</sup> This appears to be the right interpretation of *Judges* v. 19-22, especially 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Thutmosis III., Deborah, Josiah, Napoleon.

in the western hill country. This position hampered the rich Midianite caravans trading between Egypt and Chaldaea, Philistia and Gilead. They had always to pass over Manassite territory, and never passed without venting their spite in raids which ruined the harvests and robbed the countryside of all security. The Midianites grew more and more audacious ; and the Israelites, to escape pillage, were reduced to hiding in the hills and underground caves. The distress revived the memory of Jehovah, and Jehovah in answer to their prayers sent the despairing tribes Gideon.<sup>1</sup> Gideon was a loyal *Jehovist*, and a modest and brave man. He had pondered over past victories ; he believed in Jehovah's promises and power ; but he was disconcerted by the misfortunes of his countrymen, and their political and religious disorganization had brought him to the verge of despair. But at this point God stopped him and called him, as He had called Moses, to be a deliverer. Like Moses, he made excuses and pleaded his unworthiness, but finally consented. He overthrew the altar of Baal put up by his clan, and with the blowing of trumpets rallied the followers of Jehovah. Recent events supplied a grim pretext for the levy ; for his two brothers had just been murdered on the slopes of Mount Tabor by two Midianite sheikhs, Zebah and Zalmunna. Gideon sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, and Ephraim also took its share of the holy war. They tracked down the raiders and won a victory under circumstances in which the God of Israel showed that the strength of armies is not in the number of their soldiers nor in the edge of their swords, but in the faith of the fighters and the almighty power of Jehovah Zebaoth. To reward him for this brilliant triumph, the central tribes offered Gideon the crown, but he refused it. The time was ill chosen indeed to dethrone Jehovah and upset the theocracy. "No, no," said the hero, "neither I nor my sons : it is Jehovah who shall reign over you."

On the death of the "Judge" Gideon, the least worthy of his heirs, Abimelech, disowned the theocratic cause and manoeuvred for the throne. He murdered the lawful sons of

<sup>1</sup> *Judges* vi. and foll.

Gideon and won the favour of the Shechemites ; but at this juncture Jotham, Gideon's youngest son and the sole survivor of the massacre, was bold enough to come right up to the gates of Shechem, taking his life in his hands, to spoil the rejoicings over the royal election. The parable bearing his name shows that he brought all his cleverness as well as all his courage to bear, to turn Israel from the fatal course which could only end in the betrayal of the rights of Jehovah the King. His words fell on deaf ears, but events justified him. Abimelech's reign began in crime, continued some years in the midst of wars, and came to a miserable end.

The episode of Jephthah,<sup>1</sup> the conqueror of the Ammonites, does not possess either the religious interest or the historical certainty of Gideon's victory. The career of this brigand-chief, driven into a life of adventure by his family's bad treatment, but not forgetting Jehovah in his misfortunes, deserves to be judged indulgently. The language of the story shows us that in the Israelites' negotiations with their neighbours Jehovah stood on the same level as any other Elohim: Chemosh existed and made gifts no less than Jehovah. It also shows that superstition and moral degradation had reached such a point that a man who was proclaimed "Judge" could think he honoured Jehovah and earned his goodwill by sacrificing to him a human victim, and that his own daughter. Lastly, from the political point of view, the famous *Shibboleth*<sup>2</sup> incident (*Judges* xii. 6) gives us a hint of the true value of the federal bond between tribes whose jealousies and quarrels did not stop short of mutual extermination.

The work of disintegration was uninterrupted. In Samson (*Judges* xiii. and foll.) we have a "Judge" not only cruel, ignorant and superstitious, but even debauched. The life-story of the Hebrew Hercules—a Hercules without the "Path of Virtue"—presents such a mixture of mysticism and dissoluteness, that we may well wonder what can have been the historian's conception of the *Jehovist* revelation and the morality of God. As regards Samson himself, it is possible that the tradition has wronged him. Forgetting for a

<sup>1</sup>*Judges* x. and foll.

<sup>2</sup>*Judges* xii. 6.

moment the romantic or quaint exploits which have made his name popular, and remembering his Nazirite vows<sup>1</sup> and the far-seeing doggedness with which all his life he pursued the Philistine power with his implacable "*delenda est*," we are inclined to think that behind the Samson of the Eastern story-teller there lies the real Samson of history, less fantastic and far more interesting. This Samson, so it would seem, was an ardent patriot, devoted to Jehovah and capable at his own times of a genuine religious enthusiasm, and very soon was convinced that the only real danger to the existence of Israel threatened from the side of the Philistines, an enterprising and warlike nation, descended from the old Pelasgians and in possession of all the civilization of the Aryans, and placed by its Egyptian suzerains on the southern coasts of Syria to protect the great trade-routes against Bedouin invasions. If the Israelite confederacy did not make a supreme effort to hurl these old Cretan pirates back into the sea, then their infantry with their scale-armour and metal helmets would soon sweep in triumph through the valleys of Ephraim and Judah, and the tribes would once more be enslaved. It seems that Samson tried long to make his brothers understand this, that he in vain urged every reason for a holy war against the Philistines, and, discouraged and demoralized and perhaps secretly dragged down by a weakness which was to be his doom, he at last fell into the hands of those whose destruction he had sworn. His sufferings in captivity and his tragic death, that stroke of despair which clothes his suicide with the glamour of a triumph, in spite of all, command our sympathy for a man, whose life, so brilliantly begun, moved to its close in the midst of political disappointment and moral inconsistency. We need not seek to excuse him, far from it; but we must pity him for falling to a biographer incapable of appreciating the breadth of his character, and quite content to record his feats of strength and emphasize the weak side of his nature, a side by which, after all, so many great men, gifted like Samson with all the fascination of strength or genius, would never have earned the pedestals on which the world has set them.

<sup>1</sup> Vows of consecration to Jehovah. Cf. *infra* the note on Samuel.

During these centuries of anarchy, stamped by the writer's refrain, "In those days every man did that which seemed right in his own eyes," what became of *Jehovism*? Imperceptibly it dropped out of act and precept. The only part of the Israelite religion which the earlier "Judges," even the best of them, retained was its savage patriotism and faith in the theocracy. The last "Judges" arose amidst a generation which had lost all recollection of the conditions of spiritual worship. All the laws of religion and morality were broken; and Jehovah's worship survived only in gross superstition. He was represented by graven images and consulted by means of the *ephod*:<sup>1</sup> and there were improvised little "houses of Elohim," where Levites in quest of a good social position settled down with fixed incomes and organized a beginning of priestly ritualism by means of oracles which turned the shrine into a shop and profitable business to its owners. The story of Micah's *teraphim*<sup>2</sup> stolen by the Danites, gives us as clear information as we could wish on the subject (*Judges* xvii. and foll.). Micah was an Ephraimite, devoted to Jehovah, who had, like Gideon, organized a private sanctuary and set up his *ephod* with the help of a Levite hired by him to act as his priest at the rate of ten shekels a year, besides lodging, clothing and food. The oracle was a success and its reputation grew: so much so, that the Danites sent by their tribe to look for a home less harassed by Philistine invasions, came one day to consult Micah's *ephod* about the success of their explorations. The *ephod* replied that Jehovah protected the enterprise, and, the spies having gone home with all haste, the tribe, elated at Jehovah's answer, immediately equipped the expedition of emigrants. On their way to take by surprise, at the sources of Jordan, the industrious and peaceful town of Laish, whose inhabitants lived "after the

<sup>1</sup> The *ephod* in this corrupt form of *Jehovism* was, like the *teraphim*, a figure of Jehovah, a wooden idol plated with metal. Later, the name was applied to the surplice of officiating Levites. Originally, the *ephod* and *urim* (afterwards called *urim* and *thummim*, *i.e.* light and perfection) were objects of popular superstition, used by the Levites for giving oracles to any who wished to consult Jehovah, by "yes" or "no," on the fortune of their undertakings. Cf. the use of *urim* and *thummim* in the priestcraft of later times. *Num.* xxvii. 21; *1 Sam.* xxviii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The word *teraphim* is used in the singular in *1 Sam.* xix. 13, 16.



manner of the Sidonians," that is to say peaceably on the fruit of their labour, the Danites halted in Micah's native town. Every one was out in the fields. It seemed an irresistible opportunity to carry away the sanctuary, with the *ephod* and *teraphim* and all the paraphernalia of worship, including the Levite. The latter at first objected to this piece of robbery, but on grasping how much he had to gain by becoming the priest of a tribe instead of serving an individual, he started off gladly with the expedition, stealing all that Micah had entrusted to him. The inhabitants returning from the fields were roused to indignation and flew in pursuit of the sons of Dan. The latter had wisely put the women, children, cattle and booty in the van of their column. "What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?" said the Danites to Micah. And he said, "Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and are gone away, and what have I more? And how then say ye unto me, What aileth thee?" The Danites answered, "Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household." With which they turned their backs upon him: "And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back into his house." The Danites surprised the unsuspecting town of Laish, burnt it and massacred the inhabitants, and settled in this rich territory, after setting up in Jehovah's honour, the graven image made by Micah. And this sanctuary continued a rival of Shiloh to the end of the kingdom of Israel!

To the thoughtful reader, this episode and the one following it (*Judges* xix. and foll.), which is too humiliating for these pages, need no comment. They speak volumes on the downfall of the moral religion of Jehovah and on the complete relapse of the Israelite tribes into the heathen *Elohimism* of the neighbouring populations. Of the revelation of Jehovah only his name is left, and the name covers a multitude of infamies. The demoralization is incurable. All the dark forebodings of Moses and Joshua are fulfilled. Unless God interposes with His Providence and Himself calls His faithless people back to life, the religion of the Jehovah of Sinai is dead.

## CHAPTER II.

### FAILURE OF THE REFORMER SAMUEL.

RUTH I.-IV.<sup>1</sup> BIRTH AND CALL OF SAMUEL—I SAM. I.-III. SAMUEL'S REFORMS—I SAM. VII. THE ISRAELITES DEMAND A KING—I SAM. VIII. SAUL KING OF ISRAEL—I SAM. IX. X. SAMUEL'S FAREWELL—I SAM. XI. XII.

THE stories of the *Ephod* set up by Gideon at Ophrah, of Micah the Ephraimite and of the shrine of Dan, have made it clear that in the days of the "Judges" the tribes, and even private individuals, did not scruple to multiply graven images representing Jehovah and to organize religious centres with the connivance of the Levites, who with *Urim* and *Thummim* were then making their first experiments in residential priesthood. Men flocked to them to consult Jehovah by casting of lots, and the consultations were very lucrative. The most popular of all those centres of pilgrimage was always Shiloh. It possessed the Ark and Moses' Tent, and we do not find that any tribe ever ventured to build another Ark or to reproduce for its own benefit the Tables of the Law. Even in their darkest days, Israel consistently looked upon the Tent of meeting and the portable coffer as the rallying-point of the tribes, the authentic centre of their religion and the original

<sup>1</sup> It is the fashion to discredit the book of *Ruth*. No doubt, it has reached us in a very late edition, revised in the light of later theology and legislation. But we accept the main facts of the story. If the historical value of the tale had been open to dispute after the return from Babylon, the Jewish "lawyers" would never have admitted into their Canon a book which represents David, the ancestor of the Messiah, as descended from a Moabitess.

germ of their political and religious organism. In the eleventh century the old sanctuary itself had lost its former spirituality. Men still flocked but the "word of Jehovah was precious."<sup>1</sup> Firstfruits were brought, sacrifices offered and there were family rejoicings "before Jehovah," but the law was forgotten and the superstitious formalism of Aaron's successors had lowered the holy Ark to the level of the golden calf. The Ark was a fetish, a talisman, a kind of material deity, to whom presents were made, a god who, in the words of the ancient prayer, could "walk before" the people and give them the victory over their enemies.<sup>2</sup> And so, at the time of the battle of Aphek, the Ark was taken to war and was captured by the Philistines. Real piety and fervent prayer were things so far forgotten at Shiloh that when poor Hannah of Ramathaim was surprised by Eli pouring out her heart to Jehovah, the first impulse of the priest was to bid her go away and "put away her wine." Besides, the morals of the Shiloh priesthood were far from perfect. History tells of the poor pilgrims' terror at the famous three-pronged fork with which, after unfairness over the sacrifice, the attendant would come and pick out the meat from the worshippers' cauldrons. The misdeeds of Eli's sons were worse still, and everyone knew that around the house of God the honour of women was no longer safe.

This last point of resemblance between them would have completed the degradation of Jehovah's sanctuary to the level of Baal-Berith's or Baal-Peor's, had not the religion of Jehovah, though betrayed by its official guardians, retained its vitality through the virtue of individuals in families like those of Elimelech and Naomi, Boaz and Ruth, Elkanah and Hannah, the mother of the reformer Samuel. There was also at that time in the mountains of Ephraim a body of religious agitators or unauthorized preachers who were beginning to be talked about. At first isolated cases had been known: men of strange demeanour, austere habits and extravagant imagination, whose terrible figures arose in times of crisis, poured their curses on the disloyal nation and foretold disasters which

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Sam.* iii. 1, precious = rare, scarce.

<sup>2</sup> See 1 *Sam.* iv. 18, v. 3, vi. 8, 9, 19.

did not fail to overtake it. When Renan and R. Kittel<sup>1</sup> compare these sentinels of Jehovah to the modern dervishes, they gratuitously introduce into Bible History a judgement which leads religious thought astray instead of enlightening it. We might much more fairly compare these forerunners of the Hebrew prophets to the visionaries of Saint-Médard or of the Cévennes, or to those fanatics among the Scottish Presbyterians whom Walter Scott describes in *Old Mortality*. They believed in the Theocracy and would hear of no compromise; they fed their minds on the memory of Moses' most fiery discourses; they were tormented physically by a kind of divine possession; and they went through the land censuring the *ephod*, and pouring contempt on *urim* and the paraphernalia of divination which wrung answers from heaven for a money payment. To divination they opposed revelation; to the official oracle free inspiration; to ritual the Spirit of Jehovah. The priests hated them; the crowd felt for them a respect not unmingled with dread. They were called "Seers," while they themselves claimed to be bearers of "the word of Jehovah."<sup>2</sup> What are we to think of these extraordinary men? According to the historians who deny to God's Spirit the place which the Bible gives it in the religious evolution of Israel, the "Seers" were nervous invalids,<sup>3</sup> like the Pythia, the priests of the Cabiri, or those initiated in the Bacchic, Orphic or Eleusinian mysteries. Their trouble was "Hysteria."<sup>4</sup> Supposing this to be true, as it is undeniable that Prophecy has been the best educator of the human conscience that the world has ever known, it would follow that "Hysteria" preached morality, that disease brought health, madness taught wisdom, and souls fettered by wickedness and falsehood owe to nervous invalids the message which brought them deliverance! Are the scientific demands of our opponents satisfied by that solution, which simply exchanges the supernatural for the absurd? Ours, in view of

<sup>1</sup> R. Kittel, *Geschichte der Hebraer*, ii. p. 97. Cf. Sabatier, *Esquisse*, etc., p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II. Seer, Prophet and Nazir.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix II. Seer, Prophet and Nazir.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Dieulafoy, *Le Roi David*, Paris, 1897, p. 127. Richer, *Etudes cliniques sur la Grande Hystérie*.

the facts, are better satisfied with the explanation of St. Paul: the "foolishness" is the "foolishness" of God, for it confounds the wisdom of men.<sup>1</sup> But the identification of the prophetic possession with the Bacchic, or with any other form of nervous derangement, so far from being a verified fact, seems to be the fruit of a superficial observation. All our mental states, religious or otherwise, are determined by the nervous system. Nothing can be truer. But the mistake is to suppose oneself justified in identifying the cause of these mental states with the nervous phenomenon which accompanies them and to look for their meaning in their physiological origin rather than in their moral results.

From the rise of Hebrew Prophecy to the preaching of the Christian Apostles, all the sowers of spiritual life, including the Divine Sower Himself, were looked upon as "possessed." There is no reason to object to the term, considering that the ancient world knew no other to describe the phenomena accompanying inspiration, which till then had been observed only in the cycle of Dionysiac cults.<sup>2</sup> When the Bacchic devotee, excited by furious music, dishevelled dancings and intoxicating drink, felt the Bacchic frenzy rising, and was beside himself with supernatural energy, he pretended to be filled with the divine spirit and was regarded as being *ἐνθεος*, or "full of the god." Poisons had taken possession of his nervous system; and the nervous system, being a faithful register of the external stimulating and intoxicating influences, translated his impressions by an extraordinary ferment of the senses, which in turn expressed itself in fits and crazes in which the superstitious saw the presence of God. This inspiration, which was brought about artificially by an excitement of the animal spirits and the intoxication of the lower nervous centres, was only a counterfeit of genuine inspiration. It produced for a moment the sensation of a superior external power getting possession of the patient, putting him beside himself and giving him a superhuman energy and "second sight," seeming to raise

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. i. 25.

<sup>2</sup> See Westphal, *l'Alcool et les dieux*, 1903; and cf. W. James, *Religion and Neurology*, 1903, ch. i.

him to a supraterrrestrial, untrammelled and truly living existence. It was a parody of the feeling experienced by the soul, when the Holy Spirit takes possession of it, controls it and frees it from the limitations of ordinary life to raise it to the life in God. In each case, the nervous system, which is the organ of the spirit, becomes the instrument of a triumphant external force seizing it and infusing into it an energy not its own, which raises it above its normal capacity and by turns lifts it up and dashes it down. It is not surprising then if, in each case, the first shock betrays itself in similar physical effects, and the body gives way and the mind raves under this unaccustomed power, which both charms and terrifies and makes its subjects the frenzied yet passive slaves of its mysterious sovereign will. If the baptism of life at first produced a fever in the elect, that simply proves that the first recipients of inspiration were of the same flesh and blood as ourselves, and that the Prophets were human and, like the rest of us, carried their heavenly treasure in earthly vessels. The religions of the ancients were wrong in attributing Bacchic possession to the Spirit of God. Modern science is equally wrong in attempting to reduce the inspiration of the Hebrew "seers" to a morbid physical condition; for it mistakes effects for causes and physiological consequences for generative principles. In both "seer" and "bacchant," the inspiration is produced by an external agent, a "spirit" entering the organism and taking possession of and inspiring the nervous system. The origin of the stimulus in each case must be judged from its results. The one, the inspiration of the natural religions, led humanity back, by orgiastic cults, to mere animalism. It was a spirit from below, a bestial, demoniacal inspiration. The other, the inspiration of the Biblical religion, raised man, by the worship of Jehovah, to God. It was therefore a Spirit from above, and an inspiration from God. Pointing to the history of Prophecy, the Spirit of God has the right to say as the Son of God said pointing to the history of the Gospel, "believe, because of these works."

This, it seems, will suffice to establish our scientific right to look upon the forerunners of the great Prophets, as the

Bible presents them, not as mere fanatics, thanks to whom Prophecy grew out of mental derangement, but rather as men of God chosen by divine Providence to found the spiritual line of Jehovah's representatives: authors of the written and witnesses of the living Word, and forerunners and founders of spiritual religion and the new humanity. Undoubtedly, this chosen band of men, whose task it was to revive and carry on the work of Sinai, was at first but dimly conscious of its own inspiration. The "seer" is the "prophet" groping for himself, and it is only gradually that the man of God gives up external excitements and symbolical rites to the sooth-sayer and false *nabhi* and hears the revelation for himself in the internal voice by which God reveals Himself in the heart through meditation and prayer. The fact remains that, from the beginning of the prophetic movement, the men who spoke in Jehovah's name were really raised up and inspired by Jehovah. The Israelites saw this clearly enough, and, with unerring instinct, called these preachers of the divine appeal "Men of God" or "Men of the Spirit."

The history of a community shows us generally at a critical period of its growth one man specially marked out to be the embodiment of its genius, to give it consciousness of its own mission and to fit it for its performance. Samuel stood in this relation to the Prophets. Nothing could be more simple, touching and suggestive than Samuel's entry into life and acceptance of his mission. He is a child of prayer: his birth and his godliness are an answer to prayer. Dedicated by a mother's love to the sanctuary of Shiloh, and brought up by Eli, the priest and "Judge," he learned while still young that the infidelity of the priests was dragging the religion of Jehovah and Israel itself to their ruin. He paid more heed to Jehovah than to human mentors, and Jehovah, speaking to his indignant conscience, warned him of the terrible chastisement which was to make Shiloh a heap of ruins, Israel a nation of slaves, and himself, Samuel, the restorer of the Theocracy. The priests were doomed; henceforward the Prophets were to make their voices heard, and the "Judgeship" in their hands was to rescue the chosen people from lying guides and restore the kingdom of Jehovah.

Samuel undertook the task courageously. It would have been interesting to follow through the successive steps of his work of restoration the extraordinary character who completely changed the course of history. Unfortunately, in the record we have of him, his pre-eminent achievement, the institution of the Monarchy, overshadows all the rest.

The book which tells the story of Samuel swarms with inconsistencies, which must astonish any attentive reader. Instead of attempting to reconcile incompatible differences, the wisest course is to acknowledge with the scholars whose patient research has thrown a flood of light on these pages, that the *First Book of Samuel* preserves and blends—as the Pentateuch does in the case of Moses—three separate traditions of the great Prophet's public life and the part he played in the events which gave Israel a king.<sup>1</sup> According to the first of these, which is permeated with a theocratic spirit exactly analogous to Moses' devotion to Jehovah, the monarchy owed its rise to an act of disloyalty on the part of the people. The human king supplanted Jehovah: Samuel left no stone unturned to prevent an institution which God Himself granted to His rebellious people only as a punishment.<sup>2</sup> Saul was chosen by Samuel, by Jehovah's command, and elected king in the presence of an immense gathering representing all the tribes. In the second version, Saul, while seeking for his father's asses, is pointed out by God to Samuel, who anoints him secretly. Here we have no resistance on Samuel's part. Saul is the instrument chosen by Jehovah for the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines,<sup>3</sup> and he becomes king after beating the hereditary foe. The third tradition shows us Saul, by the help of favourable circumstances, enforcing his claims upon the nation's choice by an exploit not unlike Gideon's.<sup>4</sup> He begins as the "Judges" began. The story of

<sup>1</sup> See Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Richter und Samuel, ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau*, 1890. Haupt, *The Sacred Books of the Old Testament*, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. vii. 2-viii. 22, x. 17-25<sup>a</sup>, xii., xv. Cf. Hos. xiii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. ix., x. 1-7, 9-12, xiii. 3 (reading *Saul* for *Jonathan*).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. xi. 1-11, 14, 15, and some fragments of xiii. and xiv.



how the cowherd became king reads like a page from the epic of *Judges*.

Now these three versions can be traced to two cycles of tradition, one which regards the monarchy as treason to the plan of God and a misfortune for the people, and another which, on the contrary, considers that the appearance of a king was in agreement with the will of Jehovah and the immediate interests of Israel. Our modern historians do not hesitate between them. "The one, which we may call the 'royalist' cycle, is clearly the older and reflects the primitive Israelite point of view, in which the monarchy is a benefit conferred by Jahve, and a necessity. The other, which we may call the 'anti-royalist' cycle, expresses views not anterior to the prophet Hosea."<sup>1</sup> A verdict so uncompromising surprises us. Where are the primitive writings in which the Israelites who were loyal to Jehovah set forth their monarchical predilections? We do not know of a single one. On the other hand, the attitude of Joshua and the "Judges," the refusal of Gideon, the parable of Jotham, and the miserable end of Abimelech justify us in tracing a diametrically opposite tendency in the traditions of Israel. To admit that the notion of "the opposition between Jahve and the monarchy" is "not anterior to the prophet Hosea," we should have besides to ignore the revelation of Jehovah and the theocratic institutions of Moses. And we have shown elsewhere why, for our own part, we could not consent to such a sacrifice. If Samuel is only "a 'seer' in a country town, unknown to Saul, who is paid a few pence for the recovery of something lost"; and if Saul, the first king of Israel, "began his career like a 'Judge,' one of those heroes who impressed their contemporaries solely on the strength of their fearless patriotism";<sup>2</sup> then it is idle to ask why the Biblical tradition ascribes to Samuel the institution of the two powers which have stood opposed in deadly conflict through all subsequent history, viz. the Prophet and the King: or why his ascendancy was such that Jewish scholars

<sup>1</sup> A. Lods, *Les sources des récits du premier livre de Samuel sur l'institution de la royauté israélite*. Paris, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> A. Lods, *op. cit.* pp. 262, 284.

gave his name to the central portion of the annals of Israel, which contains the whole of David's biography; or why, finally, Samuel enjoys such pre-eminent honour among the Prophets, that Jeremiah can find no other name to associate with that of Moses:

Then said Jehovah unto me;  
 Though Moses and Samuel stood before me,  
 Yet my mind could not be toward this people.<sup>1</sup>

Every difficulty disappears, on the other hand, and historical consistency is restored, if we maintain the priority of the "anti-royalist" tradition, and the authenticity of its portraiture of Samuel and its estimate of the monarchy. This tradition, which is the most complete and important of them all, shows us Samuel as a reformer whose decisive action marks a turning-point in the destinies of Israel. In the triple character of *nazir*,<sup>2</sup> "judge" and "seer," Samuel stands out from the start as a man of destiny. Through his education at the central sanctuary of Israel, he was better equipped than any of his fellow-countrymen to understand their aspirations and feel the shame of sacerdotal disloyalty, and to pave the way for religious reform and a return to Jehovah by cementing numerous friendships among the sheikhs and "nazirites" of the Israelite clans. On the morrow of the disasters which deprived the chosen people of their sanctuary and their liberty, Samuel, already known, loved and respected by every patriot and puritan throughout the tribes, was marked out by force of circumstances as the indisputable leader of the coming reforms. Opportunity found him ready. The Tent of meeting which had been destroyed he did not re-build; the Ark, which had become an idol and was in the hands of the Philistines, he made no attempt to recover; and the Levitical clergy which had proved its pernicious influence, he was careful not to restore. He returned to Ramah, his native city, made it the centre of the reformed religion, and gathered round himself the young apostles of Jehovah who were to form the first "school of the prophets."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jerem. xv. 1.   <sup>2</sup>See Appendix II. Seer, Prophet and Nazir.   <sup>3</sup>1 Sam. xix. 20.

What was his doctrine?

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."<sup>1</sup>

That saying of Samuel's to Saul gives the key to the whole secret of his reforms. It restores in those few words the central idea of religion and makes the Prophet of Ramah the true successor and heir of the Prophet of Sinai. Those few words are an epitome of the religion of Jehovah and the teaching of the spiritual father of the Prophets. We see him teaching his disciples not only sacred music and the national history and the elements of literature, which were to make them the true historians of Israel,<sup>2</sup> but also, and above all, the moral claims of the worship of Jehovah. The little that we know justifies us in attributing to Samuel the beginning of the spiritual commentary on the laws of Moses which constitutes the unity and originality of all the preaching of the Prophets. The Apostle St. Peter, exclaiming "all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days,"<sup>3</sup> names, with the assurance of inspiration, the prophet Samuel as the founder of the unbroken line of preachers of the law of conscience, and forerunners of Jesus Christ. Samuel not only organized his new forces: he led them himself to the fight. We find him year by year undertaking missionary circuits round by Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah, calling together great assemblies of the tribes and organizing missions, which would make it possible for all Israel to hear the preaching of the revival. "Return to Jehovah," the words rang out, "obey His voice, and be no more rebellious against His words. Give Him your hearts, and go no more after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain."<sup>4</sup> This prodigious activity bore fruit. Not only did he prevent

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 22.

<sup>2</sup> From Samuel to Ezekiel, it is always the Prophets who are represented as the writers to whom we owe the history of *Gesta Dei per Hebræos*.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iii. 24.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Sam. vii. 3, xii. 21.

the demoralization, which could not have failed to follow the rout of Israel at Aphek and the capture of the Ark by the Philistines, but his preaching, gaining dramatic force from the recent disasters, was the means of rallying the scattered tribes by reviving among them the federal spirit of the religion of Jehovah. For the first time, Israel repented, not under pressure of transient pain or local necessity, but through a consciousness of Jehovah's rights and a desire to base the welfare of the kingdom on obedience to His Law. It was the dawn of the Theocracy.

The Philistines took fright at this peaceful revolution, which bade fair to be a new birth, and, to anticipate the coming danger, threw themselves upon their vassals. But Jehovah was watching, and the Philistines were defeated.<sup>1</sup> No doubt, this victory was not as complete as the chronicler assumes, since the suzerains of Israel, after their defeat, were still able to maintain their monopoly of all weapons and instruments of iron.<sup>2</sup> But the stone of Ebenezer none the less marked the first stage in a glorious progress, in which the exploits of Samuel, taking up the unfinished work of Joshua and Moses, were destined to give effect to the theocratic constitution demanded by Jehovah, to establish the chosen people securely in a free land, and thus prepare the way for its supremacy over the surrounding nations of Philistines, Phoenicians, Hittites and Aramaeans, all Semitic tribes scattered here and there over Canaanite soil. It was a unique opportunity. At that precise moment, not one of those powers was equal to claiming the hegemony of Syria. But, centralized by Israel and transformed by its influence, they might have given the Eastern World a brilliant successor to the departed glories of Elam, Babylon, Assyria, and the Pharaohs, and finally set up in the meeting-place of nations and races the rule and kingdom of Jehovah. Whence came the diversion which cut off all these glorious prospects at the outset? For an answer to that question, ask the opponents of the Prophets and that school of short-sighted nationalists, whose separatist policy never ceased to unsettle the destinies of the chosen race and to make them

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Sam.* vii.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Sam.* xiii. 19-22.

stray from the path marked out by Jehovah, right on to the final catastrophe. The aim of their restless Jingoism was to make Israel “like unto other nations” and to build its fortunes on the same foundations, a clever king, large armies and powerful allies. Jehovah was to be content with sanctuaries, priests and offerings, and that His people should worship Him as other peoples worshipped their tutelary deities. Such a programme, it is clear, revived the separation of the spiritual and the temporal, the sacred and the secular, religion and morality. In a word, it led the religion of Israel straight back to the errors of pagan *Elohism*. It had in its favour historical tradition, the example of neighbouring states, and the secret leanings of the human heart, for ever enamoured of earthly vanities and unwilling to be converted. The mass of the people always lent a ready ear to such doctrine, which, strengthened by popular prejudice, proved the reef on which the theocratic aspirations of the Prophets of Jehovah were destined to be wrecked.

Samuel, the first Prophet, was also the first martyr of Prophecy. He had just moulded the nation, given it a consciousness of its own unity and called it to higher ambitions than those of a loose collection of disconnected tribes. But the sense of nationality was no sooner roused than it was exploited by the spirit of nationalism. The kingdom, which Samuel had intended and prepared for Jehovah, was diverted and made over to a man: “We will have a king!” Samuel saw all his hopes and labours dashed to the ground: he felt that such a request was the death-warrant of the theocracy, and he strove to resist the fatal impulse.<sup>1</sup> But the people were beside themselves, as they were again a thousand years later, when they cried out before Pilate, “We have no king but Caesar.” The whole future of a nation sometimes depends on the action of a single moment of its existence, as when the Jews stood before Pilate or the ancient Israelites before Samuel. God respects man’s liberty and withdraws from the scene when human freewill asserts itself, and lets events take their course. Thus Jesus, by the wish of His fellow-countrymen, is led to Calvary, and Jehovah, yielding to the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. vii. 6-22, x. 17-19, xii. 12, 13.

entreaties of His people, commands Samuel to crown the usurper of His throne. Samuel here offers a rare example of obedience and unselfishness. He does what is most repugnant to him. Though a determined opponent of monarchy, he resigns himself to become the founder of it; and anxious as he is to keep the supreme authority in the hands of the Prophets as ministers of their king Jehovah, he gives up the reins of power after designating Saul as God's elect. No doubt, he first takes the precaution of setting down in writing the duties of the king to Jehovah, and it is probably the elements of this charter which have been incorporated in *Deuteronomy*; <sup>1</sup> but circumstances are stronger than men. "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected *me*, that I should not be king over them." Words like these show clearly enough what could be expected of a regime sprung up under such auspices. From that moment a wrong direction was given to Jehovah's temporal kingdom. The evolution of the plan of Redemption none the less pursued its forward course, but in the history of its progress, the acts of the monarchy were nearly all negative. The Prophets, being deprived of the spiritual "Judgeship" which secured the sceptre to Jehovah, became the spokesmen of the opposition, implacable critics, whose remonstrances were submitted to but whose advice was never followed. At long intervals, a better disposed king tries to be taught by them, but the dignity of the throne is ill at ease under such imperious guardianship; and priests, false prophets and other courtiers spare no pains to stultify his well-meaning but clumsy efforts. Besides, the ruinous policy and the rivalries of usurpers soon tore the kingdom into two irreconcilable parties. Thenceforward, the chosen people exhausted its strength in fratricidal strife and idolatrous alliances. Samaria raised up the golden calf and fell. Jerusalem, her rival, little by little filled herself with strange gods, became the city which killed the Prophets, and disappeared in her turn, burying in her ruins the last hopes of a theocracy under the headship of Jehovah.

<sup>1</sup> I *Sam.* viii. 9, x. 25, xii. 12; *Deut.* xvii. 14-20. Cf. I *Sam.* viii. 5 and *Deut.* xvii. 14.

## CHAPTER III.

### INSTITUTION OF THE MONARCHY.

SAUL'S MISDEEDS—I SAM. XIII. AND XV. DAVID'S YOUTH—  
I SAM. XVI.-XVIII. DAVID SPARES SAUL—I SAM. XXIV. AND  
XXVI. SAUL'S DEATH—I SAM. XXVIII. AND XXXI. JEHOVAH'S  
PROMISE TO DAVID—2 SAM. V. AND VII. DAVID'S SIN AND  
REPENTANCE—2 SAM. XI.-XII., PS. LI. AND XXXII. ABSALOM'S  
REVOLT—2 SAM. XV.-XIX. SOLOMON'S ACCESSION—I KINGS  
I. AND II. SOLOMON'S FIRST YEARS—I KINGS III. SOLOMON'S  
CORRUPTION—I KINGS V.-VIII. JEHOVAH WITHDRAWS THE  
KINGDOM OF ISRAEL FROM SOLOMON—I KINGS XI.

A CENTRAL government, even in the circumstances in which the Israelites established it, could not but have its uses. The first kings called into being a political organization, an administration and an army of well-defined strength. They also won victories which freed Israel from its state of subjection and knitted the tribes together firmly around an impregnable capital. Religion itself seemed to gain by the new institutions. Samuel had the wisdom to crown the king in the name of Jehovah, Whose throne he was usurping. The king, therefore, as a political factor, did not represent a rupture with Jehovah. On the contrary, he was Jehovah's substitute, his "Anointed," the administrator of Jehovah's domain, not only in war, as the "Judges" had been of old, but also, in a stable and permanent manner, in times of peace. Owing its foundation to the religion of Jehovah, the monarchy made of it the state religion, and this religion, unceasingly threatened by heathen encroachments, could now hope to

find in the sovereign its official and watchful defender. We need not discuss the worth of state religions or of the dignitaries entrusted with their defence. To insure the religious welfare of the theocracy, Jehovah had wished to keep it in strict dependence on the Spirit from Above, which acts freely and chooses its instruments as it pleases. That was why He called Samuel to power and raised up after him the line of the Prophets or Men of the Spirit. When these had been put on one side by the institution of a temporal power transmitted from father to son, individual inspiration gave way to the work of administration, and the guidance of the Spirit had to make room for legal investiture. The more this work and investiture were regulated by personal or dynastic interests, the more the spiritual dependence of the people on Jehovah was relaxed. Jehovah, Whom the kings had made master of the land of the Baalim, became Himself a Baal; Israel called Him "my Baal," installed Him in the high places of the dethroned Baalim, re-erected round Him the *mazzeboth* and *asheroth*<sup>1</sup> and gave itself up to such infamy that the Prophets, feeling that the theocracy was dead, ceased to be *theocratic* and became *Messianic*. In other words, they abandoned all hope of seeing Jerusalem or Samaria re-establish the religion of Jehovah, and turned their indignant gaze to restorations in the far future, to the coming of a Messiah sent by God to found a new kingdom on the ruins of Ephraim and Judah. The principal theocratic Prophets were Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah and Elisha. The Messianic Prophets are those whose writings have been preserved.

Samuel had anointed Saul, a rich Benjamite, valiant in war and of a fine presence; a man after the people's heart. To avert the perils to which the monarchy might expose the theocracy, he had enrolled the young king in the brotherhood of the Prophets.<sup>2</sup> But no sooner had this soldier, sprung of a tribe of soldiers, tasted military glory, than he began to despise the counsel of his benefactor. His head

<sup>1</sup> The *mazzeboth* and *asheroth* (or *asherim*) were sacred stones and trees (or simply posts), and very ancient symbols of nature-deities.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5-13.



was turned by his victories over the Moabites, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines, and he deserted the Prophets for the priests and consulted Jehovah by casting of lots. Samuel made a final attempt to regain his lost influence. He reminded the monarch that he owed his power to him and gave him directions for his conduct of the Amalekite war. Saul disobeyed, and the rupture was complete. "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel mourned for Saul."<sup>1</sup> In spite of this first failure, which justified all his worst fears, Samuel did not lose all hopes of the monarchy. His first choice had in a measure been determined by circumstances: he had, on the command of Jehovah, chosen the hero marked out for him by popular enthusiasm. That hero was now disqualified. Despite his victories and his popularity in the camp, Samuel ignored him and went so far as to pour the holy oil on the head of the man who was to wrest the crown from the family of Kish and the tribe of Benjamin. This was a young shepherd of Judah, "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance," called David, the son of Jesse. This time, no other inspiration but Jehovah's was allowed to rule his choice of a king. "Look not on his countenance . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."<sup>2</sup>

David's first exploits and the vicissitudes which raised him to power are recounted in pages of great literary beauty, whose authenticity remains unshaken by the diversity of their sources, their frequently clumsy combinations and the revisions of the compiler. In spite of fifty years of effort on the part of critics anxious to clear Saul at David's expense, and to reduce almost to nothing the spiritual rôle of the Prophets,<sup>3</sup> nothing can destroy the supreme harmony of the successive pictures which, with the exception of a few interpolations, occupy our attention from chapter xv. to chapter xxxi. of the *First Book of Samuel*. We need not stay to prove it here. Suffice it to say that, to restore the internal unity of the accounts of the first period of David's life, it is

<sup>1</sup> I Sam. xv. 34.

<sup>2</sup> I Sam. xvi. 7.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, p. 334.

only necessary to insert after 1 *Sam.* xviii. 1 the events interpolated by the compiler into 1 *Sam.* xvi. 14-23,<sup>1</sup> and to regard the mention of Goliath of Gath in 2 *Sam.* xxi. 19 as a mere mistake in the later nomenclature of a series of battles and exploits.<sup>2</sup> These two modifications are a very small matter, compared with all the changes proposed, which would displace chapters without which it is impossible to explain either Samuel's authority or the religious importance of David's accession. Here are the facts in order. Samuel, by Jehovah's command, goes to a village of Judah to choose an obscure young shepherd to take Saul's place. This is David. He is selected for his good heart, and because in his soul he is a believer, an artist and a hero. Samuel does not know him. In making him anoint that little fair-haired shepherd, the Spirit of Jehovah gives Israel a monarch whose political and religious genius will make his glory immortal. A short time after, a war with the Philistines affords the young son of Jesse an unexpected opportunity of gaining fame. As the conqueror of Goliath, he is presented to the king, who takes him into his personal retinue. Saul's son, Jonathan, one of the most attractive figures of those troublous times, conceives a passionate attachment for David, and, Saul now beginning to suffer from that mysterious malady which darkened and dishonoured the closing years of his reign,<sup>3</sup> David, the favourite squire, with his unrivalled skill as a minstrel, is quite naturally selected to apply his music to calming his master in the acute fits of his disorder. Yet matters grew worse. Saul, becoming more and more irritable, took umbrage at his singer's popularity. He hated him for his accomplishments, and perhaps the recollection of Samuel's parting words one day opened his eyes: the man who was to tear the purple from his shoulders was no other than David! From that moment, Saul spared no pains to rid himself of the son of Jesse. It was to no purpose that, by a fresh exploit, the conqueror of Goliath obtained the

<sup>1</sup> The verses 19-23 would appear to be parallel to xviii. 2. The words "mighty man of valour" (verse 18) are not intelligible except after chapter xvii.

<sup>2</sup> 2 *Sam.* xxi. 15-22, xxiii. 1-23.

<sup>3</sup> 1 *Sam.* xv. 28.

hand of the king's own daughter. Saul persecuted his son-in-law so desperately, that, to save his life, David had to flee into the mountains. Then began a time of trial in which his adventures brought out clearly the implacable jealousy of Saul and the generosity of the outlaw towards his persecutor. While Saul's impotent fury was increasing discontent around him, adversity was steeling David's steadfast heart, grouping a brave bodyguard around him and ripening his tactical genius. Matters stood thus, when an unforeseen event hastened the catastrophe. The Philistines, whom Saul had never completely crushed, organized a fresh expedition and advanced towards Mount Gilboa. David, in despair, had crossed the frontier and sought shelter among them. Saul, at the sight of the Philistines' camp, was seized with panic, and having become unfit to consult Jehovah fruitfully through His Prophets or His priests, he stooped to implore a witch to call up Samuel, who had died without setting eyes on him again. The answer he received at En-Dor concerning the issue of the battle completed his consternation. He risked the battle and fought with the courage of despair, but suffered a bloody defeat, Jonathan and his brothers falling in the press. Saul, seeing the seriousness of the disaster, refused to outlive it and fell upon his sword. Such was the close of the restless and disappointing career of Israel's first king. Simple in his way of life, truly patriotic, and brave on the field, he lacked only two qualities, genius for organization and faith in Jehovah. His statesmanship never foresaw or profited by victory, while his religion, which was merely superstitious devotion, led him from Prophet to priest and from priest to witch. And so his reign, marked by futile cruelty<sup>1</sup> and fruitless regrets, left Israel enslaved and the theocracy sadly weakened.

The qualities which Saul lacked were the master qualities of David. He possessed a third besides, which enhanced all the rest, and that was his large and generous soul. There are few characters as complex as that of the son of Jesse. We must not throw a veil over the cruel acts which disfigure it and are the only too genuine marks of the Semitic hero. It

<sup>1</sup> *I Sam.* xxii. 9.

is only fair to mention in passing that of the three incidents which most directly mar the history of David's reign, two appear very doubtful on a scientific investigation of the original sources. The first is where the clumsy scribe accuses the conqueror of burning the people of Rabbah alive in brick-kilns,<sup>1</sup> whereas the corrected text makes it clear that David employed the vanquished in the construction of brick buildings, which is a very different thing. The second is the passage in which the aged king bequeathes to his successor in bloodthirsty terms his legacy of rancour.<sup>2</sup> It is proved now that in this chapter we are dealing with a late interpolation, intended to cloak the vengeance of Solomon under David's commands. Thus we see that criticism does not always labour with the previous determination to belittle the great men of the Bible. The texts whose genuineness it maintains are precisely those which have made David's virtues

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 31. There is no question here of *punishment* but of *work*. For (a) David *brought* the men *forth* out of the town, and presumably sent them elsewhere.

(b) No cruelty equal to that supposed to be here related is imputed to any even the most barbarous nation.

(c) It is inconceivable that the inhabitants of *all the cities* were subjected to such treatment.

(d) To put *in* is not the same as to put *under*. The expression refers not to instruments of *torture*, but rather to implements or places for *work*. The first of these seems from 1 Kings vii. 9 to be a saw for sawing marble. The other two (in the plural) are probably iron-mines (the word means a *pit* in Aramaic; cf. also Daniel iv. 25) and iron-foundries (the root of the word means *to separate*, i.e. the iron from the ore).

Finally, *malben*, according to the two places where it occurs, is not a brick-kiln, but a brick building. Nahum certainly does not exhort the people of Nineveh to repair the brick-kiln (iii. 14), and above all, there was no such brick-kiln at Pharaoh's gate (*Jerem.* xliii. 9). The preceding verb (with *zar*) does not indicate what David *did* once, but what he *used to do* with conquered Ammonites. He had therefore not killed them, since he used to do something with them. The small change of a *resh* into a *daleth* (a very easy and very frequent change) gives us the sense "he used to make them work at the brick building" (collective noun for buildings made of brick, fortifications, etc.).

This change is all the more natural since there is a similar mistake in the word *malben* (written *malken* in the text) and that the text of *Samuel* contains many others much more serious than this.

David then appears to have employed his prisoners in marble saw-works, iron mines and foundries and the erection of defence or other works.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings ii. 5, 8.

immortal: his generosity towards his most implacable persecutors, such as Saul, whose life he spared and whose death drew from him the most beautiful of all elegies;<sup>1</sup> his readiness to forgive, as in the cases of Abner, Shimei and Absalom;<sup>2</sup> his steadfastness in disaster; his chivalrous conduct towards the captains who brought him water from the well of Bethlehem at the risk of their lives;<sup>3</sup> lastly, his humility under the Prophet Nathan's reproof and his contrition couched in accents which have served for three thousand years as the expression of every true repentance.

After the rout of Gilboa, Abner, the commander-in-chief of Saul's army, gathered together the remnants of his host, crossed the Jordan and put Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, on the throne, at Mahanaim, in the safe country of Gilead. But David, who had respected Saul as Jehovah's anointed, was in no way disposed to ratify Abner's choice at the expense of his own. He returned to Judah, proclaimed himself at Hebron, and while the ephemeral reign of Ish-bosheth came to a miserable end in the midst of palace intrigues, the chiefs of the people were hurrying to Judah to anoint the son of Jesse.

It was about the year 1000 B.C. When the Philistines knew that David was king of the provinces which had obeyed Saul, they understood the danger and pounced upon Judah, to isolate it from the other tribes and crush the new-born monarchy. But David out-manoeuvred them, succeeded in forcing their lines in the vale of Rephaim and defeated them so thoroughly that the suzerainty of the plain of Jezreel, the meeting-place of caravans, slipped hopelessly from their grasp. This disaster to their reputation and their finances lowered them to the second rank and wrested from them the hegemony of Southern Syria. The dangers of this long campaign taught David that to hold the reins of all Israel in a single hand would be impossible so long as the southern tribes were separated from the rest by the impregnable fortresses stretching from Ekron to the Jordan. The proudest and best situated of these was Jerusalem, the old Jebusite city, perched like an eyrie on its rocky precipices. It had till then defied all assaults. David resolved to make it his capital. He

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. i.    <sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. iii. 13, xvi. 11, xviii. 5, xix. 4.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. xxiii. 15.

organized the siege of it, and his lieutenant Joab carried it by a surprise attack. Thenceforward, from Dan to Beersheba, the unity of the kingdom was an accomplished fact. Israel had a centre, and the whole life of the tribes, hitherto divided, was concentrated around the castle of their lord. Politically, the consequences of this transformation were most happy. Having organized his power, David now undertook the great wars which put him in possession of his domain. Moab was driven out of Gilead, Ammon rolled back into the desert, the Aramaeans, whose encroachments threatened the Jordan, were driven back by David and his faithful generals, Joab and Abishai, beyond the frontiers of Damascus. Meanwhile the Idumaeans had fancied that they could resume with impunity their raids on the south of the kingdom. Joab flew to the help of Judah, caught the invaders south of the Dead Sea, killed their king, obliged his son Nadad to seek refuge in Egypt, and established garrisons along the Red Sea as far as Ezion-geber. The foundation of a kingdom of Southern Syria, in attempting which Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites and Philistines had successively failed, had at last been achieved by the Hebrews. The promise made to Abraham and Moses was fulfilled, and the hero of this triumph was David, the anointed of Jehovah. It need not surprise us that the pious reverence of the Israelites exalted the son of Jesse as the hero of heroes and steadfastly associated with his reign the golden age of *Jehovist* theocracy. For David was not only a conqueror of genius, taking rank among the first in the world's history. His unshakable faith in God, Who had entrusted him with power and given him the victory; his readiness to acknowledge his faults and his efforts to redeem them, while so many, even Christian rulers, regard themselves as superior to the laws of elementary morality; his anxiety to attribute his successes to Jehovah and his failures to his own sins; his perseverance in ever seeking in his extraordinary fortunes for fresh reasons to strengthen the authority of the Prophets; lastly, his deep religious feeling venting itself in glowing poetry:—all these things have secured for David in Israel's shrine the same proud pre-eminence as on the field of battle. He was not

only a psalmist-king, but a Prophet-king and the king of psalmists. Historical science, occasionally over-sceptical, endeavours to deny David's claim to any of the psalms attributed to him in the Psalter. But there is such a complete harmony between the tone of his principal psalms and the character of the founder of Zion, that the Church will not surrender to arguments, often very flimsy, the spiritual treasures of the poet-king's experiences, but will continue to build up the corporate and individual piety of her members on the foundation of King David's.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the incomparable services rendered by the son of Jesse in establishing the *Jehovist* state, and in spite of the personal virtues which had made him the pattern of loyalty to Jehovah, David, by the very fact of his triumphant kingship, introduced the very manners and customs which were destined to prove the ruin of the theocracy and of *Jehovism*. Every Eastern potentate, in order to compete in magnificence with his neighbours, was bound to have near his palace a temple and a harem. No sooner had David founded his capital and built his royal house than he conceived the plan of erecting a sumptuous abode for the God who had secured his triumph. As a first step he brought with great pomp to Jerusalem the Ark of the Covenant, which had long ago fallen into neglect, and whose only shelter in the old days was a simple tent, in keeping with the spirituality of the *Jehovist* worship. The tent had been commanded by Moses, and satisfied all the demands of the "Judges" and Prophets; but a mighty king of the East could not be content with it. It clashed with the splendour of his court; national pride was dissatisfied with the simplicity of its contrivance; and David accordingly made it a duty to raise to Jehovah a palace of stone, panelled with cedar-wood and plated with gold. The *nebhîm* ("prophets") were alarmed. They foresaw that if Jehovah were enthroned in the manner of the gods of the East, He would receive the same worship as Assur in his temple at Nineveh or Ammon in the sanctuary of Thebes; a priesthood and a ritual would be officially substituted for the Prophets and their spiritual worship. Such a lapse

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix III. The Psalms.

into materialism must be averted at all costs. Nathan accordingly went to David and said to him, "Thus saith Jehovah, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. . . . Spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel . . . saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedar?"<sup>1</sup> It would have been impossible to proclaim more loudly the spiritual nature of the God "Whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain," Who seeks no other sanctuary but the heart, and to Whom the whole course of history bears witness that He has no need of a sumptuous dwelling to abide with His people and make them feel His presence. Jehovah is not like other gods, His worship is not like other worships, and nothing must be allowed to divert Israel from the spiritual religion which is the foundation of the theocracy. Such was the message Nathan brought to David. The only "house" by which Jehovah wishes to be served is David's, that is to say, the family which He has chosen and placed at the head of the chosen people to keep it in its allegiance to its divine king, and to which He now promises, as a reward for the godly intentions of its chief, an everlasting kingdom destined gradually to embrace the whole world. This declaration, which echoes the promise made to Abraham, became the fountain-head of all Messianic Prophecy.<sup>2</sup>

David bowed to Jehovah's prohibition, and blessed Him for the protection promised to his posterity. The idea of a sanctuary was abandoned.<sup>3</sup> But, though David had understood, his court failed to understand. There are currents into which if a man plunge, he must inevitably be swept away. The temple which David had dismissed from his thoughts was erected by Solomon, and posterity, dazzled by its magnificence, exalted Solomon as the wisest king in all the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 5; 1 Chron. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Sam. vii. 12-16, xxiii. 1-7, where David shows the invincible tenacity of his faith. Hence his occasional striving to pierce the mists of the future and to foresee his great Successor. Psalms like ii. xxii. cx. (cf. cxxxii.) are a prelude to Messianic Prophecy.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. vii. ; 1 Chron. xvii.



world. In the eyes of the ruling classes, Solomon was the man who had clothed the national worship in a splendour worthy of the glory of Jehovah and of the greatness of the kingdom; and the national history, readjusting the facts of the past, violates the whole spirit of Nathan's speech by attributing to him an announcement that the sanctuary would be built by the king's heir.<sup>1</sup> The writer of *Chronicles*, in fact, goes so far as to depict the closing days of David's life as entirely engrossed in the preparations for the marvellous building.<sup>2</sup> It is quite certain that the temple which was built on to the palace of the house of Jesse played a unique part in the religious development of Israel.<sup>3</sup> But, taking it all in all, its influence was on the side of evil. It was the temple, which, by putting Jehovah on the same footing with other gods, made the capital of the Hebrews more easily accessible to foreign worships. It was in the temple that those traditions arose which perverted both the spirit and the letter of the *Jehovist* revelation. And it was from the temple that there issued, from the idolatrous Solomon to the decide Pharisees, the most obstinate opponents of the Prophets and of Jesus Christ.

While the temple was destined to kill true religion, the harem dealt the death-blow to morality. Saul had not given

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 2 Sam. vii. 13. The *Book of Kings* (xv. 17-18) says that it was owing to his numerous wars that David had no leisure to build a temple. A compromise between this opinion and Nathan's prohibition occurs in 1 Chron. xxii. 8 and xxviii. 3, where Jehovah refuses David as the builder of the Temple because he is a man of blood. This misunderstanding caused the interpolation of a verse which spoils the sense of the whole of Nathan's discourse. 2 Sam. vii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chron. xxii.

<sup>3</sup> B. Stade (*Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 1887-1888) rightly insists on the fact that Christian theology has in all ages felt the effects of Solomon's action. To this day, says Valeton in *Histoire des Religions* (Chantepie de la Saussaye) 1904, pp. 211-212, divine worship, in both matter and form, is descended from the worship developed in the Temple of Jerusalem.

Solomon's Temple gave the world the most perfect and purest type of worship and the most God-fearing nation compatible with the *Elohistic* religion, that is to say the natural religion of the heart, which is ever ready to refine its theology, multiply its ceremonies and enrich its sanctuary, provided always there be no suggestion made to it of conversion or obedience to the moral code of the Spirit. Hence its wide influence. The Church of Rome owes its success to the same adaptation of spiritual religion to the secret leanings of human nature.

way to the morals of Oriental courts, in which custom requires that every political triumph should bring with it an increase in the numbers of the victor's servants and wives. But David acted otherwise. To the two wives who had shared the vicissitudes of his youth, Abigail and Ahinoam, he had added Maacah, the daughter of an Aramaic king, Haggith, Abithal, Eglā, Bath-sheba, and concubines and wives from Jerusalem, who constituted the harem of his palace.<sup>1</sup> To gain possession of the beautiful Bath-sheba, the king had stooped to one of those crimes too frequently met with in the lives of Oriental tyrants, and which involve the suppression of subjects whose existence is an obstacle to the sovereign's self-indulgence. Such a crime, committed by the head of the theocracy, brought the alarm of the *Jehovist* puritans to a climax. The Prophet Nathan re-appeared before David, threatened him in the name of outraged morality, and, announced, at Jehovah's bidding, disasters whose effects the culprit's repentance, deep as it was, failed to avert.<sup>2</sup> The murder of Uriah was not only a heinous crime: it cried shame on the corrupt morals lately introduced by the institution of the monarchy. The rapid succession of events which cast a gloom over the closing years of the great king, the murder of Amnon, the revolt of Absalom,<sup>3</sup> the secession of Sheba,<sup>4</sup> the conspiracy of Adonijah and the intrigues of Bath-sheba hurrying on the coronation of Solomon;<sup>5</sup> all these conflicts, which disgrace the end of a glorious reign, sprang out of the jealousies of princes born of rival mothers and competing for the throne.

Bath-sheba was certainly not the profound political schemer painted by M. Dieulafoy in his *King David*.<sup>6</sup> Her conduct in the case of the son of Haggith, on two separate occasions, leaves no doubt of her shortsightedness.<sup>7</sup> She owed all her influence to her beauty. Her husband was old, and she had obtained an irresistible ascendancy over him. It was to this, combined with the support of his tutor, Nathan, that Solomon owed the good fortune of obtaining the crown. Did the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. v. 13, xv. 16, etc.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. xi.-xii.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. xiii.-xviii.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. xx. 1-22.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings i. ii.

<sup>6</sup> Dieulafoy, *op. cit.* pp. 258-324.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Kings i. 11, ii. 19.

Prophet who poured the holy oil on the young prince's head retain for any length of time his influence over him? Is it to his early teaching that we must attribute the reputation of wisdom which clings persistently to the memory of the son of Bath-sheba, and which later tradition expressed in the touching dialogue in which Solomon asks Jehovah for an "understanding heart"? Certain it is that Solomon's dream is preceded in the story by his marriage with an Egyptian princess, and that this unhallowed union, so far from heralding any glorious blessing from Jehovah, is the logical prelude to the ostentatious and idolatrous reign of the great despot.

Solomon was no sooner on the throne than he began to rid himself of all who could possibly give him offence, such as Joab, Adonijah, Abiathar and Shimei, without taking any account either of their past services or of his father's promises. It is possible that the representatives of *Jehovism* were themselves also sacrificed to his vindictive suspicion. At any rate, they disappeared from the scene. The Prophets were silenced, and the leader of religion was Zadok, the chief of the royal priesthood. Solomon did not desert the God of his fathers, but his reign marks the revival of the *Elohism* type of worship, and the abiding emblem of this new *Elohism* was the Temple of Jerusalem. It is difficult to form a correct estimate of the dimensions of the building. The record of Solomon's reign, unlike the history of David, does not put us into contact with authentic sources: the original statements are all overlaid and exaggerated by the admiration of successive generations for the great king and the Temple he had bequeathed to them, which was the nation's pride. It was said that relays of thirty thousand men, relieved every three months, had been employed in the construction of this wonderful sanctuary, while seventy thousand more transported the materials and another eighty thousand worked in the quarries. These later estimates, which would attribute to the little Hebrew temple an amount of labour such as was never required even by the most tremendous of Egyptian monuments, reveal plainly enough the spirit in which the story was composed. We need attach no more importance to statements of this kind than to those that Solomon made

silver in Jerusalem as common as stones, that he used gold plate at his table, that his harem contained a thousand women, that his provision for one day was a hundred sheep and thirty oxen, "besides harts, and gazelles, and roebucks, and fatted fowl,"<sup>1</sup> or again that the reputation of the great king's wisdom brought all the East crowding to his court and that his stupendous works included three thousand proverbs, one thousand and five songs, and scientific treatises on all trees from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall, and on all animals, from quadrupeds and birds to reptiles and fishes.<sup>2</sup>

All this is superhuman, and we may hazard the guess that our conception of Solomon has been coloured by the literature and vain regrets of a down-trodden nation, who loved to find some solace for the miseries and pains of exile by contrasting with their present humiliations the glorious memories of a long-buried past. Although not overstepping the needs and resources of a small nation, the temple and palaces erected by Solomon took no less than twenty years to complete.<sup>3</sup> They were the offspring of a monarch's caprice and pride, and they dazzled the crowds which thronged from every quarter for their inauguration. But they brought with them enormous expenses. It was a great ambition to wish to bend vassals, subjects and foreign ambassadors to that mingled fear and admiration which elsewhere surrounded the throne of a Saitic Pharaoh, of a monarch of Tyre and Sidon, or Babylon or Calah. To attain this object, Solomon, the youthful heir of a self-made dynasty, was bound to follow the lines already laid down by the ancient civilizations of Asia, and the customs invented by them for the benefit of their hereditary sovereigns. "Thus it was that at Jerusalem the palaces and the Temple were, so to speak, imported and borrowed ready-made from the Phoenicians, who alike by geographical position and community of race and language were naturally marked out to be to the Hebrews both masters and lawgivers."<sup>4</sup> Hiram, the ruler of Tyre, con-

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* x. and iv.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Kings* iv. 29-33.

<sup>3</sup> Solomon's temple stood 2389 ft. above sea-level. See plan, Appendix viii.

<sup>4</sup> Perrot and Chipiez: *L'Art dans l'Antiquité*, vol. iv. pp. 369 and foll.

tracted for the work and flattered Solomon's ambitious dreams of magnificence. He was his architect, and his contractor: sent him, besides materials, masons, carpenters, founders and sculptors, and even equipped a fleet for him at Ezion-geber, to fetch from the land of Ophir gold, silver, hard wood, ivory, peacocks and monkeys. The king's agent did not do this for nothing. Besides, Solomon stopped at no half-measures. He wanted a temple panelled with cedar and plated with gold. The interior was divided into two compartments: the Holy Place, "*Hekal*," had in it an altar of incense, with seven-branched candlesticks on either side, and a table for the shewbread. The Holy of Holies, "*Debir*," was reserved for the Ark of the Covenant, which rested under the wings of two monumental cherubim of wood overlaid with gold. In the court, opposite the entrance, stood the altar of burnt-offerings, as in the forecourt of Egyptian temples. According to Chaldaean custom, a "molten sea" and other basins of the same character were grouped around the altar to enable the attendants to cleanse the victims and all the accessories of sacrifice. A barrier of cedar-wood separated these sacred things from the court to which the people had free access.<sup>1</sup> Seven years were occupied with the erection of the sanctuary and the buildings which rose to half its height on three sides of the nave. Solomon opened it with great pomp, and the Ark was solemnly deposited there, fitted with its poles, according to the custom obtaining for the sacred barges of the Egyptian gods.<sup>2</sup>

The *Elohim* of Israel now had a palace: the court was soon to follow. A hierarchy of priests was immediately established. The high priest alone might enter the "*Debir*" (Holy of Holies); the "*Hekal*" (Holy Place) was reserved for the priests; the court alone was open to the people. The sacerdotal worship developed its ritual, and burnt-offerings, gifts, incense and tithes introduced officially the reign of external adoration, clerical exploitation and that notion of "opus operatum," which was to the spiritual "*Jehovism*" what later on the Roman court became to the Gospel, and against

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* vi. vii. Cf. 2 *Chron.* iii.-v.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Kings* viii. 6-8; 2 *Chron.* v. 7-9. Cf. Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. p. 747.

which the fiery imprecations of the Prophets were hurled in vain. Solomon was not satisfied with David's sanctuary, nor were David's palaces good enough for him. His friend, King Hiram, undertook to draw up for him plans for a fortified residence worthy of the glory of his dynasty. The bulk of the work was all of Byblos stone, but such a wealth of cedar-wood was used in panelling it that one of the wings was called "The house of the Forest of Lebanon." There was to be found every requisite for the comfort of an Eastern despot: a harem, separate residences for the queens, one of which was probably decorated in Egyptian fashion for Pharaoh's daughter,<sup>1</sup> audience chambers for the great nobles, storehouses for victuals and an arsenal."<sup>2</sup> Everything was furnished with incredible lavishness and reckless expenditure. The hoardings of David's conquests being exhausted, Solomon, whose artistic tastes were well served by his administrative genius, ventured successfully on trade between Egypt and Asia, buying and selling at a profit the produce of various neighbouring countries. But this lucrative export and import trade not sufficing to cover his expenditure, he found it necessary to fall back upon unpopular expedients: taxes, loans, fixed gifts in kind and ingenious poll-taxes, the collection of which was entrusted to tax-farmers who knew how to squeeze the people, to fill the royal coffers.

The people grumbled under these excessive burdens and were filled with indignation when they saw their luxurious but insolvent king, in order to pay off the debts incurred by his own follies, hand over to his creditor Hiram twenty of the towns of Galilee.<sup>3</sup> Already Hadad, the Edomite prince, had encroached on David's domain in the south, while Solomon looked on helplessly; in the north, Israel had lost the province of Damascus; and now Tyre was rounding off its territories at the expense of the Hebrew kingdom, after exploiting its finances. It was the beginning of decadence, coinciding exactly with the rule of a king whose godless genius had ruined the principles of "*Jehovism*" by initiating the chosen people into all the seductions of the art, commerce,

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* vii. 8; 2 *Chron.* viii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Maspéro, *op. cit.* i. p. 743.

<sup>3</sup> 1 *Kings* ix. 10-14.

habits and rites of the heathen nations around. He even, out of weakness for his wives, abandoned the supreme law of Moses, that of monotheism, built an altar to Chemosh on the Mount of Olives, and openly took part in the idolatries whose shrines became as it were satellites of the Temple of Jehovah!<sup>1</sup>

He was going too far. The Prophets, whom the tyrant had silenced, became conspirators. As Samuel had urged on the shepherd David against the unfaithful Saul, so Ahijah the Shilonite one day in the fields stopped the Ephraimite Jeroboam, "a mighty man of valour," and said to him: "The kingdom is thine. Take Israel, and Jehovah will build thee a sure house as he built for David."<sup>2</sup> Solomon got wind of the plot, and tried to suppress the pretender. Jeroboam sought refuge in Egypt. But the blow had told, and the old monarch could not hope to do more than merely retard till the time of his death the catastrophe for which his faults had prepared the way. Thus unpopularity, irreligion and insolvency clouded the close of this forty years' reign, which at its outset inspired the Prophets with so much hope and astounded the ancient monarchies of the East by its splendour. Israel had desired a king after the manner of other nations, Solomon had fulfilled their wish, and never was there a proud despot who filled the part better. But nations have the form of government which they deserve. When once the kingdom of Jehovah had its court, its harem, its temple, its foreign guard and its idolatrous alliances, it grew itself to be like other nations. Chosen to be the witness of Jehovah, it had lost all claim to that distinction; and the theocratic character, which was the soul of its originality and power, was gone for ever. Then, as the potter breaks in pieces the mould which disappoints his expectations, so Jehovah shattered the instrument which proved unequal to the work for which He had fashioned it. The kingdom was rent in twain, and the Prophets, abandoning disloyal Zion, turned their disappointed gaze towards the ten tribes, which had never yielded more than a grudging submission to the yoke of Judah, and which from this point onwards assume the significant name of Kingdom of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* xi. 4-11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Kings* xi. 26, 41.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SECESSION OF THE TEN TRIBES.

THE SECESSION OF THE TEN TRIBES—I KINGS XII. THE WORSHIP OF BAAL; ELIJAH'S MINISTRY—I KINGS XVI.-XXI., 2 KINGS I.-II. THE LYING PROPHETS—I KINGS XXV. ELISHA AND NAAMAN—2 KINGS V. BAAL OUSTS JEHOVAH IN THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL; ELISHA—2 KINGS X. BAAL OUSTS JEHOVAH IN THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH; REVOLUTION LED BY JEHOIADA—2 CHRON. XXII. 1-4, 2 KINGS XI.

WE are all familiar with the mad defiance of Rehoboam, which served as the pretext for the Secession. This was not only the *finis Poloniae* of the temporal theocracy, but also the last political event of any importance before the appearance of the Messianic preachers of the eighth century. The interest of the century<sup>1</sup> following the Disruption does not consist in the exact nomenclature of the conflicts and alliances setting at variance or reconciling, as circumstances dictated, Judah, Israel and the Aramaic princes who henceforward play the leading part in the affairs of Syria. The importance of this period, which leads up to and explains "Messianism," is entirely religious. We learn from it how Jehovah was lowered to the formal cult of an Elohim, in Judah through the temple rites, and in Israel by the ancient symbolism of the bull; how He was involved in a struggle with the Elohim of Canaanites, Syrians and others, and how, in less than one hundred years, the Phoenician Baal officially stepped into His place.

The narrative of this instructive period is contained in the

<sup>1</sup> To be quite accurate, the 91 years from the accession of Rehoboam (933 B.C.) to the accession of Athaliah (842 B.C.).



*Books of Kings* (1 *Kings* xiv.-2 *Kings* xi.) and in the *Second Book of Chronicles* (2 *Chronicles* xi.-xxii.). In order to keep his bearings in the midst of the biased and contradictory accounts of these two parallel narratives, the reader must never lose sight of the following cautions :

1. The *Books of Kings* possess great historical value as regards facts ; but the editors, writing in the sixth century under the influence of Deuteronomical theology, judged the whole history of the past from the point of view of the legislation of *Deuteronomy*, and as if that code of laws discovered under Josiah had been in force in the ninth century. Thus it is they come to reproach the kings of both kingdoms for tolerating *bamoth* (“ high-places,”) and to regard Jeroboam as an arch-heretic for instituting a non-Levitical priesthood, sanctioning a plurality of altars and in his own person performing the duties of high-priest.<sup>1</sup> All these grievances, arising out of an anachronism, set the events in a false light and are apt to represent the kingdom of Israel as rebellious from a religious point of view, whereas in reality the traditional simplicity of the worship of Jehovah was better served in the rustic sanctuaries of Israel than in the pompous ceremonial of Jerusalem, and the Prophets, by the writers’ own admission, made the northern kingdom, which they had called into being, the centre of their preaching and their activity in the service of Jehovah. They did not return to Judah until Samaria had expelled them and had herself fallen under the chastisement of God.

2. The *Book of Chronicles*, which is an apologetic product of late Judaism, and was written by priests at a time when the heirs of Israel, being now Samaritans, were laid under a curse together with their ancestors, records the history of the ninth century as though, after the Disruption, there was nothing good but what belonged to the Temple and its priesthood. In order to veil the fact that the Prophets attached themselves to the Northern kingdom and regarded Judah as the real apostate :

Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah,  
And bring him in unto his people,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix IV. The High Places and the Temple.

<sup>2</sup> *Deut.* xxxiii. 7.

the Chronicler everywhere in the history of the Southern kingdom introduces Prophets quite unknown to the *Book of Kings*.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in its zeal to belittle Israel to Judah's advantage, the *Second Book of Chronicles* defies probability so far as to say that after the Disruption all the Levites and Israelites who held to the service of Jehovah sought a voluntary exile and settled in Judah so as to be able to sacrifice to the true God and avoid the idolatrous altars erected by Jeroboam to bulls, rams, etc.<sup>2</sup> There is never a word in *Chronicles* of the work of Elijah, Elisha and the mass of the Prophets of Israel. The only mention made by the Chronicler of a letter of Elijah to a king of Judah<sup>3</sup> shows that the historian imagined Elijah to be living at a time when we learn from the *Book of Kings* that he had long been dead. All these facts, besides many other contradictions and improbabilities, explain the discredit attaching in the scientific world to the data of *Chronicles* and warn us how cautiously we must receive their statements whenever they do not agree exactly with the parallel account in *Kings*.

Having premised so much for the sake of safeguarding historical impartiality, let us trace the progress of events in that obscure and complicated period. The kingdom of Rehoboam, reduced by the Disruption to a single province, was now scarcely of any account politically. But it was well protected by its frontiers, well organized internally, possessed the capital made famous by the glories of David and Solomon, and the temple sanctified by the presence of the Ark and the pilgrimages of all Israel, and, finally, could point to the dynasty to which Jehovah had by the mouth of Nathan promised an everlasting kingdom. Judah was thus likely to lead a more peaceful existence than Israel and to develop, undisturbed by revolutions, the ritualistic religion inaugurated by the service of its temple. Jeroboam's kingdom, on the contrary, more important but more exposed, had neither dynasty nor temple. Its elements were heterogeneous and its frontiers for ever exposed to the incursions of enemies as strong or stronger than itself. But it counted

<sup>1</sup> Cf. with the account in *Kings*, 2 *Chron.* xv. xvi. 6-10, xix. 2, xx. etc.

<sup>2</sup> 2 *Chron.* xi. 13-18.

<sup>3</sup> 2 *Chron.* xxi. 12.

on its side the Prophets and the party of the followers of Jehovah whose dream was to restore in Ephraim the ancestral worship and traditions which Jerusalem had betrayed. The inevitable result was a perpetual state of religious ferment and political unrest, in the midst of which the spiritual religion of Jehovah must find it difficult to establish itself and to assert its principles.

From the start, Jeroboam dealt a fatal blow to spiritual religion, when, under the pretence of restoring the primitive simplicity of worship, he gave his approval to "High places," and erected, as an answer to the Oriental and Phoenician luxury of the Temple of Jerusalem, the sanctuaries of Bethel and Dan, with their rustic altars, where the presence of Jehovah was symbolized under the image of a bull. True, the act was less guilty than when Aaron made the golden calf at the foot of Sinai; for at that time the pagan symbol contrasted strangely with the spiritual religion just founded by the Ten Words of Jehovah, whereas Jeroboam, in erecting to Jehovah the image universally regarded as the expression of divine power, meant merely to use it as a means of diverting Israel from a religion which, taking it all in all, was not a whit less superstitious, with its *nehushtan*,<sup>1</sup> worshipped like a fetish, and the pomp of its ritual, borrowed from the *Elohism* of Egypt, Phoenicia or Chaldaea. Jeroboam wished to bring Israel back from the faithless pomp of the Temple to the simplicity of the primitive altars. But the method was ill chosen. The Prophets complained and threatened. Jeroboam, intoxicated by power, proved himself a mere adventurer, and his dynasty, which dashed the hopes of the party of Jehovah, died with him. His son Nadab, who succeeded in 912 B.C., was murdered under the walls of Gibbethon in Philistia by Baasha of the tribe of Issachar. (911 B.C.)

Baasha in his turn betrayed the cause of the Prophets and allowed the worship of Jehovah to sink more and more deeply into the Baal-worship of the Canaanites. The Prophet Jehu warned him that his dynasty also would be "swept away,"<sup>2</sup> and the soldier Zimri undertook to fulfil

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Kings* xviii. 4. It probably, like the bull, was a symbol of divine power.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Kings* xvi. 3.

the prophecy by exterminating Elah his heir (888-887 B.C.) and all his household. Each successive revolution was stained by horrible massacres. Zimri had no leisure to enjoy his triumph. The army of Israel counted among its chiefs a man better qualified to be the founder of a line of kings. Omri, acclaimed as king in the camp, besieged Zimri in Tirzah, in the very palace where the conspirator had murdered his master. Omri held the kingdom from 887 to 877 B.C. He was for the Northern Kingdom, in its divided and enfeebled state, what David had been for the whole of Israel, save only in the matter of faith. He built Samaria, the rival of Jerusalem, and named it after the Elohim of the mountain.<sup>1</sup> Bold and skilful in war, he restored and consolidated his kingdom, and left his son Ahab a glorious and undisputed succession. Abroad Israel was called "the land of the house of Omri." Meanwhile, idols were steadily multiplying. It was now no longer a struggle for the spiritual purity of the worship of Jehovah, but simply to save the mere existence of that worship, which was on all sides threatened, perverted and swamped by Baalism. Ahab (877-854 B.C.) married Jezebel, a woman endowed with all the qualities of a great queen, but a fervent worshipper of Baal. She was the daughter of the King of Tyre, and her father, who was high-priest of the Sidonian Astarte, had trained her from childhood to be a bigot. She seems to have enjoyed a complete ascendancy over Ahab, and obtained from him not only permission to worship Baal and Astarte, but the right to celebrate openly and consecrate officially in Israel the religion of the Phoenicians. Ahab, who had built no temple for Jehovah, built one for Baal, in Samaria, and erected there the *asherah* of Astarte. The national deities of Tyre and Sidon had very soon in the territory of Jehovah their own altars and sacred groves. The priests and prophets of Baal flocked to the capital, became the official clergy and dined at the royal table. True, Ahab did not absolutely deny his God; at least, that is the inference from the names of his children, Ahaziah, Jehoram and Athaliah, which contain the name of Jehovah.

<sup>1</sup> I *Kings* xvi. 24.

But Ahab was a worldly king like Solomon. Endowed with great political and military talents, generous but weak, he washed his hands of religion and left it to his wife, allowing her to persecute the party of Jehovah and massacre His Prophets without giving the matter a thought. The religious revolution organized by this idolatrous queen would have completely extirpated the worship of Jehovah from the kingdom of Israel, had not God raised up a man whose commanding figure stands supreme in all this period of apostasy, and who, single-handed, arrested the triumphant progress of Baalism.

We will not stay to recount the events, familiar to all, which make up the biography—some say the legend—of this extraordinary fighter, Elijah the Tishbite, of the sojourners of Gilead. It is clear that a survey of the picture presented to us of the acts of Elijah, and more especially of his servant Elisha, makes it somewhat difficult to avoid the impression that the truth has been enlarged and history amplified by the simple-minded admiration of successive generations for the exploits of the Prophet. In order to restore the facts to natural proportions, some would apply the childish process of lightening them of all supernatural elements. The drought supposed to have been inflicted by Elijah, existed before his interference; he merely "took advantage of it." The child whom he is supposed to have brought to life again, was only "looked upon" as dead. The fire of heaven did not fall upon his altar in answer to his prayer; he "sent his servant to watch the horizon," and waited, before calling on Jehovah, till the clouds collected in the course of nature. Finally, in his death, which tradition represents as an ascension into glory, Elijah was simply "the victim of his own rashness and his fondness for thunderstorms. He died in a thunderstorm, his body was never found and the legend grew up that he had been taken up alive into heaven in a chariot of fire."<sup>1</sup> As no scientific reason compels us thus to expurgate the texts relating to the Tishbite, we cannot, for our own part, subscribe to interpretations which reduce to mere human ability the acts of a Prophet whose spiritual activity can only

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fulliquet, *l'Ancien Testament*, etc., pp. 61-68.

be compared with that of Moses, and who is represented to us as a giant of prayer. The supernatural element in Elijah's career seems to us to be organically one with his person and his work. His miracles are answers to prayer. With this general remark, we freely admit that in presence of texts so permeated with mystery and so full of details which are beyond the range of historical criticism, the wisest attitude is one of reserve. But it must be a reserve free from scepticism. The unfavourable judgement of criticism on the biography of Elijah springs not merely from religious scepticism. It is also accounted for by the compromising proximity of the biography of Elisha, a Prophet of much smaller proportions and inferior inspiration, but whose merits have been exaggerated by tradition, and whose history, overloaded with prodigies,<sup>1</sup> appears at times to be quite visibly a repetition and amplification of his master's glories.<sup>2</sup>

But what is much more important than this or that miraculous story, is the religious aspect and spiritual apostleship of these two champions of Jehovah, so closely allied in the cause they served and so different in their methods of defending it. Elijah, with his cloak of camel's hair and his contempt for the Oriental civilization which had corrupted Jerusalem, was the Prophet of the desert. "Like the lightning, he appears and disappears, and inflicts a drought upon the land in the name of Jehovah. To him throne, court, political power, wealth, the interests and honour of the State, are all things without importance. He has but one thought: zeal for Jehovah. There is a characteristic passage in *Kings* (i. 19). When, hunted by Jezebel, he is seeking safety with Jehovah, he looks for it neither in the temple at Jerusalem nor in any of the numerous sanctuaries of the northern kingdom, but in the desert, or Horeb (Sinai), the traditional Holy Mount. He goes back to the fountainhead of Israel's history."<sup>3</sup> In his relations with King Ahab, the honour of Jehovah and zeal for His Name are the Tishbite's only

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* 2 *Kings* vi. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* 1 *Kings* xvii. 17. The most striking episode in Elisha's career appears to us to be the healing of Naaman the Syrian (2 *Kings* v.). There is no reason to doubt its authenticity.

<sup>3</sup> Chantepié de la Saussaye, *Hist. des Religions*, 1904, pp. 211-215.

motives. "To him the commandment '*Thou shalt have none other gods beside me*' still survived in its full force. To set another god by the side of Jehovah was to offend the latter and to be guilty of apostasy. The public interest, the good of the State and the general prosperity were in his eyes of no weight at all compared with this principle. His enthusiastic soul abhorred opportunism: absolute exclusiveness was to him the seal of true devotion to Jehovah."<sup>1</sup> We find in the story of Elijah for the first time the admission that Jehovah may pursue His own object, independently of the transitory interests of His people, in raising up men in Israel who refuse to bow the knee to Baal. From this latter point of view we find in Elijah the first note of the later preaching of Isaiah concerning the "remnant" which shall be saved and to whom the future belongs.<sup>2</sup> In his attitude towards the moral failings of his nation, Elijah is also the forerunner of Amos and Hosea. "As the champion of the people's liberty and rights,<sup>3</sup> he resists the absolutism of the throne with all his might in the name of Jehovah. He does not hesitate to call down upon the State the most terrible calamities, if it in any way opposes Jehovah's commandments. It is this extreme severity which constitutes the importance of the part he played. As preacher and executor of Jehovah's judgements, he throws open the road by which the cause of Jehovah severs itself sharply from that of the Israelite State, and thus paves the way for the rupture between Religion and the State which finds full expression in the Messianic prophecies."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chantepié de la Saussaye, *Hist. des Religions*, 1904, pp. 211-215.

<sup>2</sup> Contemporaneously with the *Jehovist* school of Prophecy and in opposition to it, there arose, in the ninth century B.C., the *Elohist* school, that is to say, a body of religious preachers who saw in Jehovah merely a god like any other, devoid of any moral ideal, a mere patron-god, ever ready to work for the temporal success of his people. They accordingly fed the nationalist pride and urged on the kings in the paths of a policy which took account of nothing but worldly ambition, seductive alliances and vainglorious success. These were the courtier-prophets, who emulated the prophets of Baal, the false prophets whose words carried weight at court and whose fatal influence unceasingly resisted and too often paralysed the spiritual action of the true Prophets who represented the theocracy and delivered the messages of Jehovah.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. in the matter of Naboth's vineyard, 1 *Kings* xxi.

Elijah disappeared without succeeding in rooting out Baalim from the kingdom of Israel. Ahab, misled by false prophets, had met his death in a war with Syria,<sup>1</sup> whose power grew more and more threatening. His son Ahaziah reigned only two years (854-853 B.C.). He was so indifferent to the God of his ancestors, that during the illness which carried him off he sent to consult not Jehovah, but Baal-zebub, the patron-god of Ekron.<sup>2</sup> When Elisha picked up the cloak of Elijah, Joram was on the throne (853-842 B.C.). He was less godless than his brother Ahaziah, but like him pursued the policy of his mother, who was still all-powerful in the court. Elisha shows his contempt for him to his face, and seeing the cause of Jehovah losing ground daily, he maintains the struggle against Jezebel, but with other means than Elijah's. Elijah used to seek the solitude of the desert; Elisha entered fearlessly into the intrigues of the court. He knew neither the spiritual audacity nor the sublime despair of his master, who was and wished to be nothing but a man of God. Elisha, on the contrary, fought Baalim as a statesman. He shared in Israel's struggles with Mesha, King of Moab,<sup>3</sup> and with Ben-hadad II. of Syria,<sup>4</sup> and strove to add weight to his authority by good services rendered. But disappointed of his hopes, he went over into Syria, stirred up a revolution there, and instigated the ambitious Hazael to seize the throne, dazzling him with the bright prospect of coming victories over the kingdom of Jezebel.<sup>5</sup> This time Elisha found a ready listener. Hazael murdered his master and undertook his mission of vengeance against Israel. But calamity failed no less than success to bring back the northern kingdom to the worship of the true God. Baal was king in Israel. Then, forgetting the vision in which Jehovah had taught his master that spiritual victories are won not by force but by the penetrating influence of persistent and untiring gentleness,<sup>6</sup> Elisha resolved to

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* xxii.<sup>2</sup> 2 *Kings* i. 2-18.<sup>3</sup> 2 *Kings* iii.<sup>4</sup> 2 *Kings* vi. 7.<sup>5</sup> 2 *Kings* viii. 7, 15.<sup>6</sup> 1 *Kings* xix.

According to 1 *Kings* xix. 15, 16, Jehovah gave Elijah commands which he did not carry out, but Elisha did later. These measures do not harmonize with the



overthrow the dynasty of Omri, whose fatal influence had set the Phoenician Jezebel on the throne and delivered Israel over to Baal.

During the century which the Northern kingdom had found long enough to complete the abandonment of the worship of Jehovah and, both among the people and at court, alike in the official sanctuary of the capital and on the *bamoth* of the countryside, to substitute Baal for Jehovah, what had become of the Southern kingdom? Politically, its history is devoid of importance. During the first period, which extended over nearly 68 years, there was war between Israel and Judah, and Jerusalem suffered much from it. First, under Rehoboam (933-916 B.C.), Shishak I., king of Egypt, of the 22nd dynasty, invaded the land, doubtless at the instigation of his old protégé, Jeroboam,<sup>1</sup> to pillage Jerusalem and render Judah incapable of hurting the newly-formed kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Thirty years later, the king of Judah, being hard pressed by the king of Israel, was forced to send his treasure to the king of Syria to induce him to come to his rescue. In 865 B.C. the house of David was reconciled to that of Omri, and Jehoshaphat cemented his alliance with Ahab by requesting for his son the hand of Ahab's daughter Athaliah. But this alliance, which brought no glory to the arms of the two kingdoms, dragged the religion of Judah into errors which lowered Jerusalem to the level of Samaria. The religious history of the southern kingdom was however very different from that of Israel. Whereas in Israel the influence of the Prophets, even the greatest of them, could not arrest the progressive development of paganism through the bloodiest political convulsions, Judah, in spite of the faithlessness of its first two kings, Rehoboam and Abijah (916-912 B.C.), who after Solomon's example had favoured the spread of Canaanite idolatry and licentious

general character or spirit of Elijah's career. It seems to us probable that this is one of the passages in which the apologists of a later age seek to excuse questionable acts by presenting them as the fulfilments of sacred trusts.

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* xi. 40.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Kings* xiv. 22, 24. In an inscription of Shishak on the walls of Karnak, there occur the names of 133 towns and villages seized by him.

cults,<sup>1</sup> recovered itself in the long reigns of Asa (913-873 B.C.) and his son Jehoshaphat (873-849 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> Circumstances in its case were more favourable; it possessed the holy city and the dynasty of David. Passionate loyalism, which bound it to the race of David and was always true to itself, helped largely to preserve its faithfulness to Jehovah. Even in the darkest days, it was believed and loudly proclaimed that Jehovah had made a covenant with that family which He had chosen and would not allow to perish any more than the nation whose destinies it ruled. Thanks to this trust, "man hoped always against hope. When the present was most perplexing and darkest, they let their minds dwell on the compensations of the future. Thus arose that exaltation of the Jewish spirit which lends so strange a beauty to the oldest Psalms and to so many pages of the Prophets." Jerusalem, with its Temple and its memories, was also the city above all others "where the heart of a whole nation beat and the brain of a whole nation thought." It was in Jerusalem and "not in Shechem or Samaria, that the Hebrew tongue attained to perfection and Hebrew literature produced its masterpieces." There were sung the Psalms of David, and there the earliest attempts of gnomic poetry supplied the original kernel of the so-called Proverbs of Solomon.<sup>3</sup>

It was in the age of the great king that the Hebrew rhapsodists composed and collected the treasury of old lyric and heroic songs, lost works which the Old Testament refers to as the "*Book of Jashar*" and the "*Book of the Wars of Jehovah*." It is, lastly, to the comparatively

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* xiv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Kings* xxii. 2; 2 *Chron.* xviii. 1, 2; 2 *Chron.* xx.

<sup>3</sup> The *Book of Proverbs* is a combination of several collections of sayings, independent of one another, and only two of which claim to be Solomon's.

Of these, the first (ch. x.-xxii.) so much resembles the Hebrew text of part of Ecclesiasticus, that many critics have felt justified in concluding that the chapters x.-xxii. were composed after the return from Babylon. The arguments against the ascription of the second collection to Solomon (collected by the "men of Hezekiah") are not very cogent. The authenticity of chapters xxv. and xxix. (in essentials) may be allowed to stand.

Solomon may well have excelled in gnomic as David excelled in lyric composition. It is certain that classical Hebrew literature began in the first century of the monarchy.

peaceful reign of Jehoshaphat that we must assign the composition of the masterpiece of Bible history, that is the great work whose fragments constitute the oldest document in the Bible, known by the name of the "*Jehovist*."<sup>1</sup> What Athens was in Attica, that Jerusalem was in the narrow limits of Judah. The whole intellectual and moral life of the nation was concentrated there. Outside its walls there were only fields and villages. "Thanks to this privileged position, Jerusalem never ceased to grow under the kings. It profited even by the national disasters. The capital became gradually the place of refuge, and the Temple, where the *cohen* grew in power in proportion as the throne grew weaker, assumed the importance of the supreme citadel, which gave shelter to all those who wished to walk in the light of Jehovah."<sup>2</sup> The *cohen* "formerly was a mere official attached to the person of the chief of the clan and later of the king. David and Solomon changed theirs as their fancy suggested."<sup>3</sup> Under their successors, we see the principal priest of the temple of Jerusalem assuming the title of 'High Priest' and becoming the head of a numerous clergy. He has under his orders the sacrificers who kill the victims, and a whole host of servants busied with the supplying and cleaning of the temple. He is in close relation with the scribes, who, acting as secretaries to king and magistrates, edit private and public documents. Through them, he influences public opinion and little by little becomes the master of history."<sup>2</sup> This clerical ascendancy reached its climax after the captivity in the *Book of Chronicles*, which reduces the whole history of the people of Jehovah, from David onwards, to the narrow limits of the ecclesiastical chronicles of Jerusalem. The Jewish chroniclers wrote the history of the religion of Jehovah in the same way as ultramontane historians write that of Christianity. There is the same attitude of mind, produced by the same

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *Histoire d'Israël*, ii. p. 231; Westphal, *Sources du Pentateuque*, ii. pp. 253, 257-261.

We have not the means of knowing whether the stories of the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, etc., were compiled in Israel before the ninth century B.C. But it seems to us quite certain.

<sup>2</sup> Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* iv. 148.

<sup>3</sup> *1 Kings* ii. 26, 27.

causes. In the two cases, moreover, error and deceit are equally sincere.

If such was the religious evolution of Judah, it is no matter for surprise that in the crisis of the ninth century, when *Baalism* almost ousted *Jehovism*, the priest assumed in Jerusalem the part of reformer played in Israel by the Prophet. From the death of Jehoshaphat, corruption was as great in the southern kingdom as in Samaria. Jehoram, dragged into Baalism by his wife Athaliah, had murdered all his brothers, to secure his own throne. In 846 B.C., Edomite, Arabian and Philistine invasions devastated his territory, seized Jerusalem, pillaged the Temple and carried off the royal family.<sup>1</sup> The only survivor of this deportation, Ahaziah (or Jehoahaz), succeeded Jehoram in 842 B.C. But, more idolatrous even than his father, he fell, in the following year, under the avenging blows of Jehu, while on a visit to his uncle the king of Israel. The time seemed ripe to shake off, once for all, the yoke of Jehovah and to enthrone Baal in Jerusalem as he had been enthroned in Samaria. Athaliah seized the reins of power, massacred all that remained of the race of Jesse, hoping by this wholesale extermination to establish the Phoenician dynasty over Judah for ever and to make Baal king. A worthy daughter of Jezebel, Athaliah reigned gloriously and succeeded in maintaining the supremacy of the accursed race in Zion for seven years. But the descendants of Zadok were preparing in the dark the revenge of the God of the Hebrews. Jehosheba, half-sister of Ahaziah and wife of the high-priest Jehoiada, had saved from Athaliah's massacres the youngest son of Ahaziah, Joash, then a child one year old. When the child, secretly brought up in the Temple, had reached his seventh year, the priests of Jehovah won over the officers of the royal bodyguard, bought the services of a part of the troops and made them swear allegiance to the lawful heir, and, the conspiracy breaking out, overcame Athaliah, who was pursued and killed on the

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Kings* viii. ; 2 *Chron.* xxi. Cf. *Joel* iii. 1-8, 19; *Amos* i. 6-12.

While we are unable to maintain the antiquity of the *Book of Joel* in its present form, it seems clear from the passages quoted above that part at least of the text of *Joel* is older than *Amos*.

palace threshold at the same time as Matthan, high-priest of Baal, was murdered by the mob before the altars of his temple (836 B.C.).

Thus closed, in the midst of revolutions and massacres, the first century of the life of the two kingdoms. It had sufficed not only to ruin the theocracy of Jehovah, but to bring the two portions of the chosen people to a complete apostasy. No doubt the Prophet in Samaria and the priest in Jerusalem avenged the affront offered to Jehovah and restored His worship by bloody reactions. But blood, unless it be the blood of martyrs, does not fertilize the furrows where God sows the seed of the Spirit. He who strikes with the sword, shall perish by the sword. Hence, on the morrow of these bloody restorations, we shall find the king of Jerusalem shaking himself free from the tutelage of the priests, and the king of Samaria expelling the Prophets from the capital of Israel.

## *PART THE FIFTH.*

### THE MESSIAH ANNOUNCED.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE MESSIANIC PROPHETS IN THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.<sup>1</sup> FALL OF SAMARIA.

AMOS, THE PROPHET OF JUSTICE. HOSEA, THE PROPHET OF LOVE.  
DESTRUCTION OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL—2 KINGS XVIII.

THE caprice of a Prophet exasperated by the triumph of Baalism, and the bloodthirsty fury of a soldier only too ready to carry out the massacres which secured him the throne, these were, in a few words, the causes which gave Israel the dynasty of Jehu. Jehu is portrayed to us as the avenger of Jehovah. But in fact, it was Jehovah who soon was going

<sup>1</sup>The national restoration of Jehovah reformed neither religion nor morals. Then the Prophets, despairing of the Theocracy, entered upon a new form of preaching which may be summed up thus :

1. Since the chosen race has rejected Jehovah, Jehovah rejects the chosen race, which will fall beneath the blows of its enemies.
2. The remnant who repent shall retain their privilege, and Jehovah will send His Messiah (Anointed) to rally and re-create a faithful people.

This is Messianic Prophecy, and its authors are the writer-prophets. The earliest of these was Amos, a shepherd of Tekoah, in Judah, who prophesied in Israel under Jeroboam II. about 760 B.C. He denounced the corruption of Israel, and announced its approaching destruction and the reign of the Messiah.

Hosca preached about ten years after Amos, towards 750 B.C. He made a last appeal to Israel, reminding it of Jehovah's love for His people. He also foretold the coming chastisement and the reign of the Messiah.

to avenge Himself on Jehu for the affront the usurper had offered to His cause in daring to serve it by methods so barbarous. "Yet a little while and I will chastise the house of Jehu for the blood shed in Jezreel; then I will make an end of the kingdom of the house of Israel."<sup>1</sup> The words are clear. The events of the closing century of the kingdom of Israel show how much the historian was mistaken, when he made divine Providence responsible for the policy of the son of Nimshi. Jehu's zeal for Jehovah lasted for just so much time as he required to seat himself firmly on the throne. The murderer of the sons of Omri founded a dynasty which increased neither Israel's glory nor its faith. It endured for a century and disappointed all the hopes of the Prophets. It was Jehu who, when hard pressed by the Syrians, attracted by rich presents and a request for help the terrible conqueror Shalmaneser II. By admitting Assyria into the disputes of the minor Syrian states, Jehu showed the way to the formidable invader, who was soon to crush the rival principalities under the weight of his alliance<sup>2</sup> and produce harmony among their rulers by dethroning them all in quick succession. During the reign of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu (814-798 B.C.), Syria reduced Samaria to the last extremity. Israel undoubtedly owed its escape entirely to a move of the Assyrians against the kingdom of Damascus.<sup>3</sup> Joash, son of Jehoahaz (797-782 B.C.) took advantage of Ben-Hadad III.'s quarrels with his formidable neighbour, to recover from him a good part of the land which Hazael had wrested from Jehu and Jehoahaz. Joash was a valiant man of war. When challenged by Amaziah, king of Judah, he returned the proud answer: "Thou hast indeed smitten Edom. Glory thereof and abide at home." Amaziah would take no warning. Then the king of Israel crossed the frontier, completely defeated the armies of Judah, took Amaziah prisoner, and pillaged Jerusalem, its temple, and its palaces. It was thus that Jeroboam II., the son of Joash, ascended the throne at

<sup>1</sup> *Hos.* i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> An Assyrian bas-relief, now in the British Museum, shows the envoys of King Jehu bringing costly presents to Shalmaneser and begging for his support.

<sup>3</sup> *2 Kings* xiii. 5.

the moment when the kingdom of Israel had reached the zenith of its glory. Jeroboam reigned forty years (781-740 B.C.), and, continuing his father's exploits, restored to the ten tribes the frontiers formerly secured to them by King David's victories. We must not however give Jeroboam the sole credit for these conquests foretold by Jonah, the Prophet of Gath-Epher.<sup>1</sup> Israel owed its advancement in part to the humiliation of the kingdom of Damascus at that time subjected to the victorious assaults of Assyria. Jeroboam, who was favoured by circumstances, enjoyed a brilliant reign. But its splendour was transient, for the storm which was to destroy Syria was already gathering at the gates. Besides, material prosperity had brought the religious and moral dissolution of Israel to a climax.

No doubt, the revolution effected by Jehu on Elisha's instigation had drowned the worship of Baal in blood, and Jehovah had for a century been once more the official god of Israel. But, in reality, this religion with its bulls at Bethel and Dan, its pilgrimages to Gilgal and Beersheba, differed in no respect from the wholly external worship given to the Canaanite deities. There was the same superstition and the same immorality. It was the worship of Jehovah without the practice of His laws. Though wearing the name of Jehovah, the god was still Baal. This fresh apostasy, more treacherous and dangerous than all the rest, gave rise to a new form of Prophecy, which, while marking a decisive step in the religious progress of the champions of Jehovah, is also the starting-point of the three great centuries of Prophecy from Amos to the second Isaiah, that is to say, from the eighth to the end of the sixth century B.C. These Prophets, sometimes called Author-Prophets, but more correctly known as Messianic Prophets, take up again the great fundamental idea of the Mosaic revelation, the old doctrine revived in every age by every Hebrew reformer, that the bonds uniting Jehovah and Israel are not at all like those which bind other nations to their idols, but that they rest on a merciful deliverance freely vouchsafed by the true God to Israel, when Israel was groaning in its Egyptian bondage.

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Kings* xiv. 24.



This difference of origin makes the religion of Israel quite different from those of other nations. Elsewhere, gifts, altars and external rites can suffice. But here we find a moral compact with a moral personality, with the supreme and transcendent moral personality, Jehovah. This being so, it is not enough to worship Jehovah and destroy all other altars. It is useless to say: "Jehovah alone is my Baal." If the worship of Jehovah is devoid of morality, justice and real piety, the very spirit of that worship itself is wanting, and Jehovah is insulted in that worship, because the adoration wherewith men pretend to honour Him degrades and lowers Him to the level of the nature-worship of Canaan. That is the point of view of the founders of Messianic Prophecy, Amos and Hosea. Others, before them, had, it is true, spoken of it, but they were the first to proclaim the thought and to carry it to its logical conclusion. Their forcible exposition of the moral character of Jehovah fixed the nature of the God of Israel on the lines of absolute monotheism. Jehovah, said they, without ceasing to be the national God of Israel, extends His reign of justice over the whole of humanity. He made Israel His minister of justice; but if the chosen people betray their trust, Jehovah will desert them and will even employ strangers and hated enemies, like Assyria, to crush Israel and chastise it for its backsliding. Israel's material prosperity and temporal glory are nothing in the eyes of God. What God requires is a just and good nation. All the pomp of Jeroboam II. deceives none but fools; within, it is full of rottenness. The day of reckoning draws near. If the nation will not repent and restore the spiritual and true religion, it is lost.

Thus preached Amos and Hosea in the second half of the reign of Jeroboam II. Amos, a shepherd of Tekoa, whom God took from following his flock to send him from Bethlehem to Bethel, dared to sound the note of alarm in the king's very sanctuary itself (about 760 B.C.). He denounced the hypocrisy of the official religion, lashed the vices of the ruling classes and proclaimed the crime of the people of Israel, which Jehovah had separated from Jerusalem to make it the real home of Prophecy and which was setting Judah

the example of apostasy. His words created a deep sensation. Roused from its haughty security, the Israelite aristocracy lost all patience with this man of the people, who took upon himself to teach his betters morality. The clergy hastened to bring him to order. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam: "Amos hath conspired against thee." Then, finding the secular arm too slow to strike, he addressed the Prophet: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house." Then answered Amos and said to Amaziah, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees: and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.' Now therefore hear thou the word of Jehovah: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac; therefore thus saith Jehovah: Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou thyself shalt die in a land that is unclean, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land." There is no more to be said. In that supreme encounter the priest triumphs over the Prophet. Amos is banished. But with his flight Jehovah Himself withdraws from the scene and the northern kingdom is lost.

And yet, a last attempt is made to save it. Amos, the Prophet of Justice, is followed by Hosea, the Prophet of Love (about 750 B.C.). Amos, without explicitly appealing to the Decalogue, had used its ordinances as his starting point, and the words in which he censures his fellow-countrymen are superabundant proof that the moral doctrine of Sinai was no innovation, but an integral part of the ancient inheritance of the theocratic nation. Hosea, for his part, dwells more on the commandments summarized by Moses in the law which remains for ever the complete expression of all our duties towards God: "Thou shalt love Jehovah." Starting from this theme, the preaching of Hosea,

outstripping his predecessor's, rises higher and at times savours of the gospel. We already detect in him the note of the preacher of grace. While Amos reminds us of John the Baptist, Hosea recalls John the Apostle. The rough and picturesque style of the introduction of the book makes the historian's task a difficult one. We cannot, however, regard as pure allegory the episode of the beloved and faithless wife. As a mere literary device, the conception would be in bad taste and of no philosophical value. All becomes intelligible, on the contrary, if, disregarding crudities of expression, we admit that the son of Beeri passed through unhappy experiences in his married life. The pain and shame of his wife's infidelity revealed to him the inmost nature of Israel's sin—Israel the chosen and the adulterous nation. His prophetic courage was wrought out of his own unhappiness and tempered in his own tears; his own bitterness inspired those thrilling and tragic cries, in which outraged love complains and rages, entreats and curses. The burning words of Hosea had no more success than the harsh threats of Amos in stirring the soul of Israel. Both had echoed the reformer Samuel:<sup>1</sup> "I love righteousness more than sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Amos<sup>2</sup> had thundered against ritualism, recalling the simple religion of the wilderness:

I hate, I despise your feasts,  
And I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.  
Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meat  
offerings,

I will not accept them:  
Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat  
beasts.

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs;

For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

But let judgement roll down as waters,

And righteousness as a mighty stream.

Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings

In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? . . .

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Amos v. 21.

Hosea goes back to the original fault, denouncing the day when the chosen people dethroned Jehovah to make room for a human king.<sup>1</sup>

It is thy destruction, O Israel,  
 That thou art against me, against thy help.  
 Where now is thy king,  
 That he may save thee in all thy cities?  
 And thy judges, of whom thou saidst,  
 Give me a king and princes?  
 I have given thee a king in mine anger,  
 And have taken him away in my wrath.

Vain remonstrance, fruitless appeal. The chosen nation is rotten to the core. It only remains to let the bowed and cracked wall collapse. The Prophet holds his peace. The enemy is at the gates. Well could the words of Jesus over Jerusalem have been spoken then of Samaria:<sup>2</sup> "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

King Jeroboam, at the close of a long and apparently very prosperous reign, passed away in 740 B.C. No sooner was he dead than all the faults of administration and sources of weakness which his pomp had disguised became evident, and suddenly the death-throes of Israel began. Zechariah, his son, could not keep his throne more than six months, and the prophecies of Amos began to be fulfilled by the extinction of the house of Jehu. The murderer Shallum was overthrown at the end of a month by one of his rivals, Menahem, son of Gadi, who in his turn was unable to maintain his position except at the cost of the most savage barbarities. Hosea had foretold it. Now came to light the sins of Ephraim and the crimes of Samaria.

<sup>1</sup> *Hosea* xiii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke* xix. 42.

"The thief entereth in and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

They are all adulterers: they are as an oven heated by the baker.

They are all hot as an oven, and devour their judges;

All their kings are fallen:

There is none among them that calleth unto me."<sup>1</sup>

To strengthen his throne, Menahem leaned for support on Tiglath-Pileser III., King of Assyria, in 738 B.C. He paid dearly for this protection, which made him odious in the eyes of Samaria, which was ever more inclined to make common cause with Egypt than with the terrible Ninevite conquerors. Menahem died in the following year, and his son Pekahiah succeeded to the throne. But the Egyptian party was not slow to plot against him, and Pekahiah was murdered in his palace, in 736 B.C., by his captain, Pekah, the son of Remaliah. No sooner had Pekah seized the power than he allied himself with Rezin, King of Syria, to march against Jerusalem, upset the Davidic dynasty, which was accused of sympathy with Assyria, and to substitute for Ahaz, King of Judah, a king hostile to Nineveh and willing to enter a grand coalition with the object of arresting the progress of the Assyrian conqueror. The instability of Israelite politics could not but hasten the downfall of the Northern Kingdom. Hosea<sup>2</sup> had not failed to rebuke it:

Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding:

They call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria.

When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them;

Lo, they are gone away from destruction,

Yet Egypt shall gather them up,

Memphis shall bury them.

The King of Judah, being brought to bay, sent Tiglath-Pileser all the gold of the palace and the Temple to buy his assistance. Tiglath was only too ready. He asked for

<sup>1</sup> Hos. vii. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> Hos. vii. 11-12, ix. 3-6.

nothing better than to interfere and to finally take possession of Damascus and Samaria. He came with all haste, took Damascus, slew Rezin and carried the great men of Syria captive to Kir. Then, turning to Israel, he conquered Gilead, Galilee and all the land of Naphtali, from which he carried the men of note captive to Assyria. It was then that Hoshea, the son of Elah, profiting by Pekah's disastrous situation, murdered him and purchased from the conqueror the right to rule over the disconsolate remnant of Israel (730 B.C.). The kingdom had been dismembered. Benjamin, Manasseh and Ephraim were reduced to the size of Judah. Their commerce was ruined, and their lands, wasted by war, were no longer equal to the tribute levied by their royal protector. Israel, in desperation, and in the grip of intestine discord, sought for a deliverer to give it back its ancient prosperity. To effect this, it was essential to break the Assyrian yoke. Egypt alone could attempt it. So negotiations were opened. But before the coalition could take shape, Shalmaneser, who was watching on the frontier, suddenly appeared. Hoshea was captured and carried away, and Samaria was besieged. The capital was strong and offered an obstinate resistance. The King of Judah, who saw his own peril in Assyria's success, seems to have thought for a moment of marching to the rescue of the bulwark which was holding back the conqueror's victorious progress. But the Prophets dissuaded him. Jehovah's hand was striking, and who should oppose it?

<sup>1</sup> Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim !

Behold, Jehovah hath a mighty and strong one ;  
 As a tempest of hail, a destroying storm,  
 As a tempest of mighty waters overflowing,  
 Shall he cast down to the earth with the hand.  
 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim  
 Shall be trodden under foot ;  
 And the fading flower of his glorious beauty,  
 Which is on the head of the fat valley,

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xxviii.

Shall be as the first ripe fig before the summer :  
Which when he that looketh upon it seeth,  
While it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

<sup>1</sup> I will make Samaria as an heap of the field,  
And as the plantings of a vineyard :  
And I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley,  
And I will discover the foundations thereof.

The blockade dragged on for three years, and Shalmaneser died at Babylon, at the beginning of 722 B.C., without the satisfaction of knowing that Samaria was taken. One of his officers, Sargon, had just seized the reins of power when the Israelite fortress fell, brought low more by famine than by force of arms. The walls were immediately dismantled. All the inhabitants of any note, 27,280 souls in all, were removed to Mesopotamia, very far, towards the frontiers of Media. Sargon turned Ephraim into an Assyrian province, and his governor was installed in the palace of the kings of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the end, in 722 B.C., of the kingdom which two centuries before had inherited the name of Israel and the divine mission entrusted to the sons of Abraham. For two centuries the Prophets had made it the headquarters of the preaching of *Jehovism*. After vain efforts to make Israel the light of the world, they were thrust back into Judah, and Israel, having failed in its religious mission, disappeared from the political scene. The exiles of the Ten Tribes were soon lost in the midst of the populations among whom they were scattered, and the mass of the people mingled with the Assyrian settlers, who filled town and country, and gradually formed the bastard race so deeply despised by the later Judaeans and known by the name of "Samaritans."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mic.* i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Maspéro, *op. cit.* iii. p. 216, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> The fact that the Samaritans, in spite of their debased religion, still kept the Pentateuch as their sacred code, shows that Assyrian inscriptions are right, as against the historian of *Kings* (2 *Kings* xvii. xviii.), in saying that the majority of the worshippers of Jehovah were left in the land.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MESSIANIC PROPHETS IN THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH. FALL OF JERUSALEM.

#### *Section 1. Isaiah and the Reforms of Hezekiah.*<sup>1</sup>

ISAIAH, THE PROPHET OF IMMANUEL. CALL OF ISAIAH—IS. VI.  
THE PUNISHMENT ANNOUNCED—IS. I. AND V. THE ADVENT  
OF IMMANUEL—IS. VII.-XII. THE REIGN OF IMMANUEL—IS.  
XXXI. AND XXXV.<sup>2</sup>

DURING the disastrous reign of the regicide Jehu in Israel, Joash, the son of his victim Ahaziah, was re-established by Jehoiada on the throne of Judah, which had been usurped by Athaliah. Jehoiada was the high-priest of the Temple. We must not infer from this that the priesthood at Jerusalem was already an all-powerful caste. Such a position came to it only after the Captivity, thanks to the influence of Ezekiel and the Priestly Code. Everything tends rather to show that Jehoiada's success was due not so much to his exalted office as to his illustrious connexions. He was, through his wife Jehosheba, the brother-in-law of the King Ahaziah murdered by Jehu. Undoubtedly, since Solomon had built the Temple, clerical aspirations had never ceased to assert themselves. The idea of an open priesthood had fallen into oblivion. The king could still offer sacrifice, but

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was the greatest of the Prophets and exercised the greatest influence over the destiny of the kingdom of Judah. He was born about 760 B.C. and was martyred, according to tradition, about 680 B.C. Isaiah was the first to picture the Person and the work of the Messiah.

<sup>2</sup> Chapters xxiv. to xxvii. are considered a later addition, probably of the fourth century B.C.



the people were no longer allowed access to God except through the priest. And the priests, attached to the house of Jehovah, formed by themselves a close caste, to which belonged only certain families long since devoted to the priesthood and claiming descent from Levi. At their head, the descendants of Zadok, the first high-priest of Solomon's time, filled the highest offices. But no part of this privilege was as yet firmly secured, and the high-priest, no less than the other crown officers, was at the mercy of the sovereign. Joash, whose gratitude at first showed itself in a fine zeal for the temple of Jehovah, eventually shook himself free from the tutelage of the priesthood. He did not spare Jehoiada, robbed the priests of some of their privileges, and stoned Zechariah, who had incurred his displeasure.<sup>1</sup> Nor did he fail to atone for his ingratitude to God and man by a miserable end.<sup>2</sup> He had been obliged to make over his treasures to Hazael, to save Jerusalem. His son, Amaziah, who ascended the throne at the age of 25 (797-779 B.C.) met a still more terrible fate. Elated by his successes over the Edomites, he challenged Joash, the King of Israel, who seized Jerusalem, dismantled the walls over a length of 200 yards, and pillaged the Temple of Jehovah as uncereemoniously as if it had been a shrine of some idol. Disowned by his own people, Amaziah fled for his life to Lachish, but he was discovered and put to death.<sup>3</sup> Concerning the reign of his successor Uzziah, also called Azariah (779-740), we have but little certain information. According to *Chronicles*, he won victories over the Philistines, the Arabians and the Meunim, and recovered Eloth on the Red Sea. The truth of these statements would seem to be borne out by the fact that, according to certain cuneiform inscriptions, the King of Hamath sought his alliance against Tiglath-Pileser III. But his glory was short-lived. The coalition fell before Assyria, and Uzziah, smitten with leprosy, perforce gave up the reins of power to his son. "Jehovah smote the King," says the *Book of Kings*;<sup>4</sup> and the account in

<sup>1</sup> So the tradition in 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20-22. Cf. 2 *Kings* xii. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> 2 *Kings* xii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> 2 *Kings* xiv. 17-20.

<sup>4</sup> 2 *Kings* xv. 5. Cf. 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 16-21.

*Chronicles* explains that this chastisement fell upon him because he had officiated in the Temple. The episode, which was undoubtedly amplified by the priestly historian, is interesting. It introduces us to the age-long struggle by which the clergy succeeded in excluding first the people, then the king, from all ritual functions and in securing for itself alone the monopoly of all religious functions.

But, though the priests showed cleverness in securing their own privileges, they did not evince an equal jealousy in preserving the purity of the worship of Jehovah. Their spiritual influence was, oftener than not, a negligible quantity. When their own privileges were not threatened, they could be accommodating enough. This was clearly shown when, after the insignificant reign of Jotham (740-736 B.C.),<sup>1</sup> Ahaz his son, being hard pressed by the Kings of Israel and Syria, sacrificed his eldest son to Moloch and poured the Temple treasures into the coffers of Tiglath-Pileser. When the Assyrian conqueror had delivered him from his enemies, he repaired to Damascus to salute his benefactor. There he noticed the altar and sacred utensils which Tiglath-Pileser made use of in his religion, and, in a spirit of base flattery, sent orders to the high-priest at Jerusalem to have copies of them made and put in the places of those used in the Temple for the service of Jehovah. He thought this piece of servility would be sure to please the Assyrian monarch on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Not only did the high-priest Urijah not oppose this act of profanation, but he performed his master's bidding so eagerly that everything was done when Ahaz returned to his capital.<sup>2</sup> So Judah was no better than Israel. There was the same corruption among the people, the same profane luxury among the great, the same idolatry at court, the same unfaithfulness among the official ministers of religion. The lapse from the theocratic ideal was common to both sections of the chosen people. Jehovah in His indignation was about to sweep Israel from the face of the earth, and would have no reason to spare Judah. In fact, Jerusalem would have

<sup>1</sup> *2 Kings* xvi.

<sup>2</sup> *2 Kings* xvi. 33 gives Jotham's reign 16 years, evidently including his regency in the reign of Uzziah.

followed Samaria in its downfall, had it not been for an unforeseen event which was brought about by the revolt of Israel and which altered the course of history for Judah: this was the rise of Messianic Prophecy, which being persecuted in the northern made its way into the southern kingdom.

Samaria had driven out those stern preachers, who, while Israel was endeavouring to avert disaster by foreign alliances and bowing of the knee before the altars of Chiun and all the host of heaven, had stood up and declared from Jehovah that all its woes were the well-earned penalty of its disloyalty.<sup>1</sup> So the preaching which had been rejected in Bethel made itself heard in the palaces of Judah. Where Amos and Hosea had failed, Isaiah, Micah and the rest succeeded, and the reforms instigated by Hezekiah and Josiah made sufficient headway in the hearts of the people to create in their midst a picked society, a solid kernel of faithful followers of Jehovah, fully conscious of their duties and their aspirations. Of course, the bulk of the population was not won, and the policy of this élite did not prevent the coming of the national catastrophe a hundred and forty years later. But it had delayed it long enough to allow of the spiritual leaven doing its work: and after the bitter tears of the Captivity, among the new generations of the restored Zion, monotheism triumphed for ever over the age-long idolatry of Israel, and a place was prepared for the cradle of the Messiah. Messianic Prophecy among the people of Judah continued for three centuries. The first was the century of great crises. In this, one commanding figure, Isaiah, overshadows all the rest. The second was the century of great disasters, foretold, endured and lamented by Jeremiah. The third was the century of great hopes. The glory of celebrating these is shared by two Prophets, Ezekiel and the 'Second Isaiah.'

The eighth century was the decisive epoch in the history of the two kingdoms. In it began the divine reprisals: Assyria appeared on the scene, and, like a hurricane, swept away Ephraim, the guiltier of the two, while Judah must soon follow, if it did not profit by Ephraim's experience. The

<sup>1</sup> *Amos* v. 26-27.

northern Prophets, Amos and Hosea, were the first to announce the crisis, and without waiting for the death-agonies of Samaria, fled for refuge to the southern kingdom, where there arose in his turn, "a man who was beginning to exert a marvellous influence over high and low alike, namely Isaiah, son of Amoz. His activity began in the year of the death of Uzziah, and he had preached uninterruptedly during Jotham's very short reign. When Jehovah had revealed Himself to him, in the altar-smoke, seated on a throne, surrounded by Seraphim, his unworthiness had appalled him, but an angel had purified his lips with a live coal, and he had heard Jehovah's voice saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" And he had replied, "Here am I; send me." And this was Jehovah's message:<sup>1</sup> "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts, and turn again and be healed." Then the Prophet asked, "Lord, how long?" And the answer was, "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land. And if there be yet a tenth in it, it shall again be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof. . . ." The men of Judah, while less powerful than their brethren, were no less corrupt, and the divine wrath threatened them no less. But it rested with them to appease Him by repentance and to return to favour after undergoing punishment. Jehovah would then gather the survivors of the faithful on the mount of Zion and assure them a long and prosperous existence under His law. The Prophet, convinced that man is powerless to alter in any way the decrees of God except by penitence, expresses surprise at the efforts of those in authority to arrest the march of events by the futile ingenuity of worldly diplomacy. The invasion of Pekah and Rezin was, to his mind, clearly a divine chastisement, and he

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* vi. 9.

was indignant that the king should hope to extricate himself by begging for the alliance of one of the great empires against them: when Jehovah judged that the penalty was adequate to the offence, He would know how to break His own instruments of vengeance without human aid. Isaiah had rightly warned his master of it, a few days before the appearance of the allies, when he was inspecting the works which were to supply Jerusalem with water:

<sup>1</sup> Take heed, and be quiet;  
Fear not, neither let thine heart be faint,  
Because of these two tails of smoking firebrands,  
For the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria  
And of the son of Remaliah.

It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

If, however, a purely human act interfered with the course of divine justice, it would no doubt save the city; but the effect would not stop there, and the people would suffer even more at the hands of their friends than they had before suffered at the hands of their enemies."<sup>2</sup>

The remonstrance fell on deaf ears. Ahaz had no faith. He besought the help of Assyria, thus throwing the Holy Land open to the future tormentors of his people. Tiglath-Pileser came in haste, beat the allies, exiled a part of Israel, and slew Rezin, but exacted a heavy price for his victory by robbing Judah of its independence. Ahaz, in terror of his protector's power, paid him tribute, and, still better to flatter him, imported his religion into Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> At such cost he obtained the right to live in peace. In the words of the poet, it was indeed

*Propter vitam vitai perdere causas.*

We may imagine the feelings of the group of believers around the Prophets haunted by dark visions of the future. It was all over with the nation, if it thus broke its covenants and forgot the elementary duties of the national religion. Everywhere stood idolatrous altars; the abomination was

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* vii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Maspéro, *op. cit.* iii. p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *2 Kings* xvi. 10 *seqq.*; *2 Chron.* xxviii. 16 *seqq.*

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installed, by the king's own commands, in the very Temple of Jerusalem; the holy nation had disdained its theocratic ideal, was torn into two irreconcilable fragments, had plunged headlong into the intrigues of foreign politics, and was on the point of disappearing for ever in the collision of rival empires. And why? Because Israel had trampled "the law and the testimony" under foot.

<sup>1</sup> Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought;  
Speak the word, and it shall not stand.

To the Law and to the Testimony!  
If they speak not according to this word,  
Surely there is no morning for them.

And into thick darkness they shall be driven away.

To understand the views and feverish excitement of the faithful at this period, we must read the burning reproaches of the opening chapter of *Isaiah*, his *Song of the Vine* (ch. v.) and the grand discourse (chs. vii.-xii.), in which the Prophet, full of indignation at the faithless policy of the rulers who can do nothing but exclaim, now "Assyria is with us!" now "Egypt is on our side!" proclaims the advent of a King-Messiah, whose name is symbolical of the restoration of a policy guided by Jehovah: *Immanuel, God with us*. Despite the obscurities and inconsistencies which have crept into the text and which remind us of those which have injured the discourse of Jesus on the end of things,<sup>2</sup> Isaiah's prophecy of the Messiah has preserved its noble scheme and general unity. It is useless for modern criticism, misled by appearances, to apply, sometimes to Hezekiah, at other times to a son of Isaiah, the words "Unto us a child is born." The words used in ch. vii. 14, of the son and his mother, cannot apply either to the heir of Ahaz or to the wife of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* viii. 10, 20, 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Matt.* x., which confuses our Lord's words touching the fall of Jerusalem and those relating to the end of the world.

<sup>3</sup> The son is still *to be born*, but Hezekiah was then 8 or 10. The son is to be a *first-born* son, but Isaiah already had at least one, Shearjashub (*Is.* vii. 3).

Messianic explanation, which we have not the leisure to set forth in this place, is the only one which solves the difficulties of the passage and brings out the idea contained in it.<sup>1</sup> Chapter vii. announces the coming of a son sent by Jehovah ; chapter ix. defines the divine attributes of his character ; chapter xi. enumerates the spiritual graces of his reign. The influence of Isaiah's vision on Messianic and Christian theology has been incalculable. We may guess the effect produced at the time by all these threats and hopes on minds haunted by the thought of the theocratic restoration. Ephraim's cup is full. Its religious and social organization, in an advanced state of dissolution, is on the point of being for ever buried beneath the ruins of Samaria. But Judah must not be blotted out in the day of wrath. Immanuel will come and will reign. To hasten His triumph, there is but one way : to return to Jehovah, to hearken to the testimony of the Prophets and to remember the law of Moses and obey it.

Would not feelings like these, produced by political misfortunes and their Prophetic interpretation, make this a peculiarly appropriate epoch for the composition of a book like *Deuteronomy* ? It cannot surprise us that a man should have arisen at that time—a Prophet, impelled by divine inspiration—to collect the scattered legacy of Moses and to present it in a book accompanied by speeches and exhortations, which, if they were directly inspired by contemporary dangers, were all the more necessary to explain the book and guarantee its success. The mode of composition of the Gospels, and in particular of the *Gospel of St. John*, can give us some idea of the nature and inspiration of *Deuteronomy*. Nor need we be surprised that the composition and publication of the book was marked by no special event. All that the faithful worshippers of Jehovah could do in that fatal reign was to preserve their existence. While the author of *Deuteronomy* in his quiet retreat was writing one of the chief works of Hebrew Prophecy, another writer, also anonymous, was preparing to give the world “one of the most astonishing monuments bequeathed to us by the

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* viii. 8-10 is the logical transition between vii. 14 and ix. 5-6.

mind of man." The words are Renan's, and they refer to the *Book of Job*. We are not often in agreement with Renan, which makes it all the easier for us to say that to our mind he has very happily described the literary activity which made the age of Hezekiah, son of Ahaz (727-699 B.C.), the classical age of Israelite literature. "The Hebrew tongue was nearing its perfection. Besides Isaiah and his school, who had an admirable hold of the old traditional eloquence, numerous writers of rare talent were nursing the language and making it still continue to produce masterpieces. A company of men, afterwards known as 'the men of Hezekiah,' appears around the king, busy above all with making extracts and compilations; but no doubt also in some ways they constituted a literary academy, intent upon style. The king himself successfully cultivated lyric and parabolic poetry."<sup>1</sup> Hezekiah's hymn, preserved by Isaiah, is a model of psalm-writing, and shows us that the poetic form invented by David, which consisted of a rhythmical meditation of the soul on human injustice, its own backslidings and its hope in God, was very popular at the close of the eighth century. Isaiah himself, in certain passages, as for instance in chapter xii., expresses himself after the manner of an accomplished psalmist:

<sup>2</sup> I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah;  
 For though thou wast angry with me,  
 Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.  
 Behold, God is my salvation;  
 I will trust, and will not be afraid:  
 For Jehovah is my strength and song;  
 And he is become my salvation.

The *Book of Psalms* undoubtedly owes a part of its masterpieces to Hezekiah and his times. It is even possible that there existed from that time, thanks to the activity of the men of Hezekiah, a first collection of hymns, including the Psalms of David. What occurred in the case of *Proverbs* is instructive in this respect. The *mashalim* of Solomon had been preserved but left scattered and entrusted to

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *Histoire d'Israël*, iii. ch. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Is.* xii. 1.



the memory of the people. The men of Hezekiah made a collection of proverbs, which is mentioned by our present texts and in which it is probable that they added to the great king's carefully collected maxims, short anthologies of ancient wisdom, such as the "*Words of Agur*" (chap. xxx.), the "*Words of King Lemuel*" (chap. xxxi. 1-9) and the admirable poem of the "*Virtuous Woman*" (chap. xxxi. 10-31). Renan holds that the work done in the reign of Hezekiah was mainly the rescuing, from the general shipwreck of the kingdom of Israel, of the Hebrew texts composed in the North. He thinks the *Song of Songs* and the *Book of Job* were among the wreckage. What is certain is that the knowledge shown in the *Book of Job* and the literary development which the book presupposes, will not allow us to seek for its origin before the age when the poetic genius of Israel was in its prime. Besides, as the book makes its first appearance with the reminiscences of Jeremiah,

<sup>1</sup> Cursed be the day wherein I was born :

Let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed . . .

and the allusion of Ezekiel,<sup>2</sup> who names Job explicitly, everything tends to convince us that Noeldeke, Bleek, Renan and others were right when they assigned this philosophical poem on the problem of evil<sup>3</sup> to the epoch which for the number, merit, variety and beauty of its literary works, had no equal in the history of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> *Jerem.* xx. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xiv. 14.

<sup>3</sup> The problem of the *Book of Job*—Why is the innocent struck together with the guilty, and the faithful with the unfaithful?—was no doubt suggested by the fall of Samaria, which swallowed up all the Israelites in a common catastrophe. The reply given, "Worship and be silent, for God is too great for thee to ask Him for an account of his actions," did not satisfy the *Jehovist* conscience. Ezekiel advanced a step nearer the solution when he affirmed the principle of individual responsibility; "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (*Ezek.* xviii. 20). But it was reserved for the "Second Isaiah" to reveal the truth that, in the midst of God's people, the suffering of the Righteous One was expiatory. The martyrdom of the faithful is iniquitous, when it is arbitrary and forced; but it becomes sublime, when it is accepted out of love for the Holy God and for sinful fellow men (*Is.* xlii. xlix. l. liii. etc.). Thus the indignant cry of the *Book of Job*, through the inspired mediation of the Prophets, gave the world the vision of the suffering and mediating Messiah.

Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, had been on the throne four years, when Judah, in a mortal agony, witnessed the ruin of Israel. Samaria, after a three years' siege, fell beneath the blows of Shalmaneser, and Sargon carried off 27,000 captives. The voice of the Prophets had foretold it :<sup>1</sup>

Make thee bald, and poll thee for the children of thy delight :  
 Enlarge thy baldness as the eagle ;  
 For they are gone into captivity from thee.

Judah survived the disaster. Jerusalem alone in all Syria was spared ; Jehovah wished to give her time to mend her ways. Hezekiah did not at first grasp this. Persisting in the fatal policy of his father, he, in spite of Isaiah's recriminations,<sup>2</sup> entered into a coalition which brought him within an ace of ruin. This episode, which sets off the glory of the prophetic office at its best, is worth the telling. After the death of Sargon (705) Ethiopia and Egypt revolted. Pharaoh, relying on the success of Merodach-Baladan's attempt at Babylon to shake off the yoke of Sennacherib, Sargon's successor, sent a deputation to Judah, inviting it to join the coalition.<sup>3</sup> It is probable that Merodach-Baladan's embassy to Hezekiah, under pretence of congratulating him on his recovery,<sup>4</sup> really sought to make him take part in the vast conspiracy which was being organized against Assyria. Isaiah opposed it. "These men," said he to Hezekiah, "with whom thou wouldest make alliance, are those who some day will ruin Judah. Let us abide in peace, Jehovah will deliver us." This advice, which was that of faith, was no less that of sound policy ; for the coalition was beaten from the start, and if Judah entered it, it was lost, short of a miracle. Hezekiah, like his father, disobeyed Isaiah and joined the coalition. Sennacherib immediately took the field to bring his subjects back to their allegiance. The King of Sidon fell, Phoenicia yielded and other states surrendered. Edom, Moab and Ashdod were crushed, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Micah* i. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See *Isaiah* xxxi. 1-3, xxx. 15-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Is.* xviii.

<sup>4</sup> *2 Kings* xx. 12. It is now generally admitted that Hezekiah's sickness must be put not before but after the saving of Jerusalem. His miraculous recovery may explain Isaiah's influence over him.

King of Ashkelon captured and dethroned. There remained Ekron and Jerusalem. Now was the time for Egypt to intervene to prevent the capture of these two outposts. They combined with the Ethiopians. The rival armies met at Eltekeh. The Assyrians won an indecisive victory, and the Egyptians retreated. Ekron made its submission and paid a terrible penalty. Hezekiah now stood alone facing his formidable adversary. The King of Assyria speaks thus on the subject: "I took his cities and his fortresses and I shut him up in Jerusalem like a bird in his cage. . . . I diminished his kingdom by taking Gaza and Ekron, and I forced him to pay me thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver. I carried away to Nineveh, my capital, the women of his palace, the servants of his harem. . . . He sent his servant to pay tribute and make his submission. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Judging from this inscription alone it would seem as if Sennacherib had no cause for anything but self-congratulation in this enterprise. But here is the Biblical account of what happened, which is indirectly confirmed by the historian Herodotus. The King of Assyria intended to complete his victory by a descent into Egypt. The only obstacles were Jerusalem and its fortresses which he dared not leave behind him. Then he despatched an army with an ultimatum to Hezekiah. The Assyrians came to the foot of the city walls and addressed the people who crowded together on the top: <sup>2</sup> "Hear ye the words of the great king, the King of Assyria. <sup>3</sup> Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Jehovah, saying, Jehovah will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the King of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the King of Assyria, Make you peace with me, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sayce, *History of Sennacherib*, pp. 60-64. The Hebrew tradition (2 *Kings* xviii. 14) reduces the payment to 300 talents.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Maspéro, *op. cit.* iii. p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* xxxvi. 13.

one the waters of his own cistern : until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards." Hezekiah's position was desperate : if he opened his gates, then, if the Egyptians were defeated, the fate of Ekron awaited Jerusalem. Then Isaiah arose. He had always preached peace, but now he used very different language. "The talents," said he to Hezekiah, "which thou wast compelled to pay, were thy punishment for entering into the coalition in spite of me. But now the case is altered. It is against Jehovah that the Assyrian's pride is lifting its head, it is over Jehovah that he aspires to win the victory, and it is the city where Jehovah 'maketh his name to dwell' that the brutal conqueror means to treat like Ashdod or Ekron. It is enough. Jehovah is wroth and takes our part against him. Say to the barbarian who bids thee surrender :

<sup>1</sup> The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn ;

The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed ?

And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice

And lifted up thine eyes on high ?

Even against the Holy One of Israel.

By thy servants hast thou reproached Jehovah,

And hast said, With the multitude of my chariots

Am I come up to the height of the mountains,

To the innermost parts of Lebanon ;

And I will cut down the tall cedars thereof,

And the choice fir trees thereof :

And I will enter into his farthest height,

The forest of his fruitful field.

I have digged and drunk water,

And with the sole of my feet

Will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt.

Hast thou not heard how I have done it long ago,

And formed it of ancient times ?

Now have I brought it to pass,

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xxxvii. 22.

That thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities  
Into ruinous heaps.

Therefore their inhabitants were of small power,  
They were dismayed and confounded ;  
They were as the grass of the field  
And as the green herb,  
As the grass on the housetops,  
And as a field of corn before it be grown up.  
But I know thy sitting down, and thy going out,  
And thy coming in, and thy raging against me.  
Because of thy raging against me,  
And for that thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears,  
Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose,  
And my bridle in thy lips,  
And I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

We can never do real justice to the greatness of Isaiah's conduct. At no time did the Prophetic office stand higher or exert a more decisive influence. And here it is clear that religion inspires the spokesman of Jehovah with the wisest statesmanship. Hezekiah listened to Isaiah. Had it been otherwise, it would have been all over with Judah. Jerusalem would have been a heap of ruins. It was therefore the voice of Isaiah which in that crisis saved the cradle of Christianity. Finding his threats useless, Sennacherib took the road to Egypt and postponed his vengeance. Then, says the Bible, the angel of Jehovah smote one hundred and eighty-five thousand men of the Assyrian army.<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, referring to the same event, says that "in the night that the Assyrians arrived, mice swarmed into their camp and gnawed through quivers, bow-strings, and shield-straps, to such an extent that, seeing themselves disarmed, the invaders were compelled to flee." In other words, the camp was swept by a plague.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Kings* xix. 3.

<sup>2</sup> It was a common practice in antiquity to represent under the symbol of a mouse the ravages caused by infectious diseases. In hieroglyphics the mouse stands for devastating power. Cf. also 1 *Sam.* vi. on the occasion of the infectious disease among the Philistines, the guilt-offering in the shape of a mouse.

Apollo, who was credited with hurling pestilential shafts, received on that account the name of *συνθεύς*, "the sender of mice" (from *μύνθος*, mouse), not, as

The Assyrians, who had already been decimated by their victories, and were now almost exterminated by a terrible pestilence, were too weak to continue the struggle against Egypt and hurried home with the tribute of Jerusalem. Such was the close of a campaign in which Sennacherib was worsted not by force of arms but by force of circumstances, and which he describes so cleverly that we should think from his words it was a complete success, whereas, in fact, the plague had sent him cowering back within his own borders. This was the providential deliverance announced by the Prophet. Isaiah, in the account in his book, adds that on his return to Nineveh Sennacherib was murdered by his sons, and that one of them, Esarhaddon, became king in his stead. Here again secular history confirms the Biblical account: "The 20th day of Tebeth," say the Assyrian annals, "Sennacherib, King of Assyria, was killed by his son, who had rebelled. Sennacherib reigned twenty-three years over Assyria. . . . After the revolt, his son Esarhaddon ascended the throne."

Beyond all doubt, Hezekiah, ever after his miraculous deliverance, remained a fervent disciple of Isaiah, who seems to have written a book telling of the monarch's pious acts. This lost work, called the *Vision of Isaiah*,<sup>1</sup> was to show what inspired Hezekiah to undertake the restoration or rather the final organization of the Mosaic worship. It might perhaps have introduced us to a first appearance of *Deuteronomy*: certain it is that *Deuteronomy* alone could inspire a reformation like that conceived and outlined by Hezekiah. We are told<sup>2</sup> that the reformation was due to a purely personal initiative and to the preaching of Isaiah, which never ceased

has been often supposed, "the protector against mice." The name was given to Apollo as "the god of plagues." Cf. Roscher, *Lexicon der Mythologie*, 1884-1890, I. 433.

<sup>1</sup> See 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 32, and cf. xxvi. 22. Probably the last four chapters of *Isaiah* (xxxvi.-xxxix.) are fragments of the *Vision*, added to the prophecies of the son of Amoz possibly by the anonymous author of chapters xl. to lxvi.

<sup>2</sup> The modern critics who assign the composition of *Deuteronomy* to the time from Manassch to Josiah, are forced to this conjecture. They are consequently apt to exaggerate the reforms of Josiah and to minimize the importance of Hezekiah's.

to exalt Jerusalem. But that preaching itself must have had a cause, and the action of Hezekiah in destroying the *bamoth* and the *mazzeboth*, so as to force upon the chosen people a single sanctuary, would be unintelligible without the intervention of a law superior to all custom, and bringing to the misguided nation the real intention and last wish of Moses, and demanding in Jehovah's name the centralization of religion in the place chosen by Jehovah as a dwelling-place for His name. Through what combination of circumstances had the second half of Moses' Law been neglected during three centuries? History does not inform us. But that the faithfulness even of the best kings is to be regarded as merely relative, is proved to us by the constant refrain of the *Book of Kings*: "He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah; but the high places were not taken away."<sup>1</sup> To grasp the full significance of the reforms attempted by Hezekiah and Josiah, in the 8th and 7th centuries, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Temple service at Jerusalem was already at this period much less rudimentary than might be supposed from a perusal of *Deuteronomy*. We have sufficient proof of this in the preaching of the Prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel, for ever protesting against the ever-growing tendency to substitute for true religion complicated ritual and pompous ceremonial. If we fail to see that the author of *Deuteronomy* was filled with the Prophetic spirit and wished by means of his book to help on the cause of the Prophets, by recalling religious worship to its primitive simplicity, we cannot hope to understand his mission, which fills a very similar place under the Old Covenant to that of the Reformers under the New. The legacy of Moses, whether written or oral, was for the compiler of *Deuteronomy* what the apostolic writings were for the reforming theologians of the 16th century. And that is why we have every reason to believe that *Deuteronomy*, in its spirit and its essential elements, dates from Moses himself. Hence came the theoretical and abstract character of the "Moabite Code,"<sup>2</sup> already

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* xv. xxii. ; 2 *Kings* xii. xiv. xv.

<sup>2</sup> By *Moabite Code* is meant the body of laws given out by Moses on the plains of Moab and continued in *Deuteronomy*.

noticed. This is quite intelligible if we view the Code as presenting the ideal of a future condition of affairs anticipated by an early law-giver. But the *Deuteronomic* ideal is insufficient and defective, if it is to be taken literally and considered as the product of the 8th or 7th century, during which the state of both politics and religion was already far more complex.<sup>1</sup> The almost rudimentary simplicity of the religious organization outlined by Moses was no hindrance to the author of *Deuteronomy*, since his object was precisely to reform religious worship by recalling the people, misled as they were by luxury and idolatry, to greater simplicity in the form and more genuine religion in the spirit. He desired what the Prophets, his contemporaries and successors, desired:<sup>2</sup> and thus across the ages, thanks to *Deuteronomy*, the Prophets can grasp the hand of Moses, the greatest of the Prophets. Like the Prophet of the Plains of Moab, the Prophets of Judah were doomed to failure. The people, after some temporary reforms, advanced further and further along the road of ritualism, which evolved during the history of the second Temple and culminated in the Jewish fanaticism which murdered the Messiah Whom the Prophets had announced.

Be that as it may, we have seen how, at the end of the 8th century, Hezekiah was convinced of the necessity of the existence of one single Temple, and how, leaning on Isaiah's support, he undertook the realization, at least in its main lines, of the ideal sketched by *Deuteronomy*. There is no mention made of the "Moabite Code." And yet its religion is in the air. Its leaven is active in men's minds. But for the unfortunate accession of a tyrant, whose reign was a half century of idol-

<sup>1</sup> The view that the prerogatives of Aaron and the functions of the high priest are a post-exilic invention, is as contrary to the facts (see 2 *Kings* xi. xii. xvi. xxii. xxiii. xxv. 18; cf. *Jerem.* lii. 24) as the opposite view which from the functions exercised by an Eli or a Jehoiada infers the necessary existence of a regular priestly organization.

The author, or authors, of the ceremonial laws in *Exodus*, *Leviticus* and *Numbers*, idealized but did not invent. The rites of the second Temple were developed out of those of the first. Its powerful hierarchy was an improved repetition of the privileged position already filled in practice, though not in law, by Seraiah, the chief, and Zephaniah, the second priest (2 *Kings* xxv. 18).

<sup>2</sup> See *Isaiah* i. xxiv. 5; *Mic.* vi. Cf. *Deut.* x. 12, xxviii. 40; *Jerem.* vii. 21.



atrous reaction, the reformation which bears Josiah's name would have been set down to Hezekiah's credit. Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah (698-643 B.C.), was even more eager to restore the *bamoth* than his father had been to destroy them.<sup>1</sup> "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." The Prophets were persecuted and silent. The law of Moses, which had been scarcely unfolded, fell back into disfavour and disappeared. How was it that three-quarters of a century later it was found again in the Temple? Had it been brought there as a witness by the Prophet who wrote it? Had the priests, from neglect or despair, left it uncared for in a corner of the Temple? Or had the believers concealed it from the inquisitorial eyes of an idolatrous and cruel king? We shall never know. This much is certain, that it had been forgotten and remained in the Temple, in God's keeping, to await better days.

### *Section 2. Jeremiah and the Reforms of Josiah.*

JEREMIAH, THE PROPHET OF THE NEW COVENANT.<sup>2</sup> HIS CALL—JER. I. HE URGES REFORM AT THE TEMPLE GATE—JER. VII.-VIII. HE ANNOUNCES THE NEW COVENANT—JER. XXX.-XXXI. HE IS BETRAYED AND PERSECUTED—JER. XI. XII. HE IS IMPRISONED—JER. XX. THE PRIESTS PLOT HIS DEATH—JER. XXVI. HIS PROPHECIES ARE BURNT—JER. XXXVI. HE IS IMPRISONED—JER. XXXVII. HE IS PUT IN A PIT—JER. XXXVIII. HE IS TAKEN FORCIBLY TO EGYPT—JER. XLIII.

KING JOSIAH, in the eighteenth year of his reign (*i.e.* 622 B.C.), sent Shaphan the scribe to Hilkiah the high priest, to

<sup>1</sup> *2 Kings* xxi. 16. According to a Jewish tradition, Isaiah survived Hezekiah and was martyred under Manasseh. He was condemned to death for blasphemy, having asserted that Jehovah had appeared to him and having dared to liken Jerusalem to Sodom. Being pursued by the king's men, he sought refuge in the hollow trunk of an old cedar. Whereupon the tyrant ordered the tree and the man within to be sawn through together. Hence in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, "they were sawn asunder" (*Heb.* xi. 37). But we have no historical data on the subject.

<sup>2</sup> The Prophet Jeremiah was born about 650 B.C. in the village of Anathoth in Benjamin. He announced the fall of Jerusalem and preached the necessity of a

ask for the money set aside for the upkeep of the Temple. Then Hilkiah said to Shaphan: "I have found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord." He gave the book to Shaphan, and Shaphan read it. After giving an account of his mission to the king, Shaphan said to him, "Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the Law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, "Go ye, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book." So the king's envoys went to Huldah the Prophetess, who dwelt in Jerusalem, and communed with her. The Prophetess replied:<sup>1</sup> "Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, . . . because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods. . . . Therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and it shall not be quenched. But unto the King of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel; As touching the words which thou hast heard, because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before Jehovah, . . . and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith Jehovah. Therefore, behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil which I will bring upon this place."

And they brought the king word again.

<sup>2</sup>"And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up

new covenant, resting on the conversion of the heart. He was disowned, despised and persecuted, and, according to tradition, was stoned to death by the Jews at Daphne in Egypt about 585 B.C. There is no man of God whose life and sufferings foreshadow better the life and sorrows of Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Kings* xxii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 2 *Kings* xxiii. 1.

to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great : and he read in their ears all the words of the *Book of the Covenant*<sup>1</sup> which was found in the house of Jehovah. And the king stood by the pillar (*or* on the platform), and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book : and all the people stood to the covenant."

And so the religious revolution began.<sup>2</sup> The Temple, then the city of Jerusalem, then the towns of Judah and Samaria, were purged of all their accumulations of religious impurities. Hilkiyah and his subordinates were ordered to remove from the house of Jehovah all the things made in honour of Baal and the *Asherah* and the host of heaven. The *Asherah* was burnt in the bed of the Kidron and stamped to powder. The horses dedicated to the sun were removed from the porch, and the chariots of the sun given to the flames. The houses of the sodomites, where women wove hangings for the *Asherah*, were broken down ; as were also the altars of the gates and on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz. The king defiled Topheth, thus profaning even the worship of Moloch. He also desecrated the *bamoth* over against Jerusalem, built by Solomon for the gods of the Sidonians, the Moabites and the Ammonites. Josiah broke in pieces the pillars, and cut down the *Asherim* and filled their places with the bones of men, which was the worst of all defilements. Lastly, the high places of Samaria vanished in their turn. The altar of the golden calf at Bethel was thrown down and stamped to powder, after the terrible prophecy of the man of God to Jeroboam had been fulfilled :<sup>3</sup> "O altar, altar, thus saith Jehovah, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name ; and upon thee shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places that burn

<sup>1</sup> *Sepher ha Berith* (2 Kings xxiii. 2, 23 ; 2 Chron. xxxiv., in allusion to the covenant *Berith* in Deuteronomy v. 2 and xxix. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Renan, *Histoire d'Israel*, iii. ch. xiii.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xiii. 2.

incense upon thee, and men's bones shall they burn upon thee." The *bamoth* dedicated to Jehovah met with no more mercy than the others. Josiah made all their priests come to Jerusalem, and defiled all the high places from Geba to Beer-sheba. Having thus cleared the ground, Josiah returned to Jerusalem, completed his reforms by severe regulations about necromancy, magic, *teraphim* and all the superstitious practices which obtained in the land, and commanded, as a fit inauguration of a new era, that the Passover should be kept in honour of Jehovah. "Surely there was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah."<sup>1</sup>

The circumstances of the discovery of the code, and the nature of the reforms inspired by it, suffice to show that the "Book of the Law," found by Hilkiah, was not, as was long thought, the Pentateuch, but *Deuteronomy*. In the first place, the book in question cannot have been very long, since Shaphan read it when he received it from Hilkiah, and read it again the same day before the king, who, after calling his people together, read it in his turn from beginning to end before an assembly, which, before dispersing, ratified the covenant contained in it. Secondly, the book found by Hilkiah is called the "Book of the Covenant." The name, nowhere applied to the Pentateuch, reminds us immediately of both the opening and the close of *Deuteronomy*.<sup>2</sup> Lastly, the promise of Josiah to obey faithfully the covenant concluded with Jehovah, is expressed in terms which are, so to speak, taken literally from the "Moabite Code."<sup>3</sup> Besides, the *Book of Kings* sets us on the right road, when in striking language it depicts the terror which seized Josiah as soon as he had heard the newly-discovered law. What part of the Pentateuch was calculated to make such a formidable impression

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Kings* xxiii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb" (*Deut.* v. 2). "These are the words of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses . . . in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb" (*Deut.* xxix. 1). Cf. also *Exod.* xxiv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Compare 2 *Kings* xxiii. 3, with *Deut.* xxvi. 16, 17, xxix. 1, etc.

on the king's mind? Where are the threats which reveal the burning "wrath of Jehovah"? Are they not in *Deuteronomy*? The reading of the four other books, with their sacred history and interminable ritual, could have had no other effect, at that time, than to distract the attention of the king and spoil the impression produced on his mind.<sup>1</sup> If we still had any doubts about the nature of the book which Josiah had in his hands, his reforms would once for all dispose of them. The reaction against idolatrous worships, the destruction of *bamoth* and *mazzeboth*, etc., are the carrying out of the commands contained in *Deuteronomy* vi. 14; vii. 4; xii. 2, 3, 29-31; xiii. 6; xvi. 22, 23; xvii. 3, etc. The centralization of worship, the suppression of the altars in Judah and Samaria, and the concentration of the priests at Jerusalem, etc.—these measures fulfil the central law of *Deuteronomy*, which is found nowhere but in this particular code: xii. 4, and foll.; xvi; xviii. 6, etc. The suppression of magic and necromancy similarly have their counterpart in *Deuteronomy*.<sup>2</sup> Lastly, the celebration of the Passover, an event so new that the historian cannot help telling us that no such festival had been celebrated in Israel for several centuries, once more brings us face to face with the text of *Deuteronomy*, which for the first time introduces into the national laws, under the name of "Passover,"<sup>3</sup> a solemn festival, consecrated by usage, and transforms into a theocratic feast, as the anniversary of the national deliverance, the first day of *Mazoth*, the time-honoured rustic festival of the harvest-month.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The only passage in those books which can be connected with the preaching of *Deuteronomy* is *Leviticus* xxvi., which seems like *Deut.* xxviii. to draw its inspiration from *Exodus* xxiii. 20. But that chapter is alone in a context which breathes no such spirit as the discourse in the plains of Moab, and besides we have already seen that the body of laws, *Levit.* xii.-xxvi., is later than *Deuteronomy*.

<sup>2</sup> *Deut.* xviii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Deut.* xvi. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Critics at the present day are unanimous that the book found by Hilkiah was *Deuteronomy* (see Wellhausen, Dillmann, etc.). This puts a difficulty in the way of the supposed priority of the Priestly Code (*Leviticus*, etc.). The Prophets know nothing of that Code. To account for this ignorance, Kittel (*Gesch. der Hebräer*, 1888, p. 43) suggests that the Code originally existed as a private document kept in the archives of the priests and known only to them. But surely this view arbitrarily creates a wide gulf between priests and Prophets, whose

At the time of these momentous events, Jeremiah of Anathoth was starting on his Prophetic career. Born in a village one league to the north-east of Jerusalem, the son of Hilkiyah, one of the local priests, Jeremiah was still quite young when Jehovah called him "to pluck up and to plant" and set him up as a "brassen wall" against the rising flood of idolatry. Though brought up amidst surroundings which could assure him a life of ease, he gave up all and devoted himself to his mission. He remained unmarried so as to give himself heart and soul to a ministry, on the issue of which he never deceived himself, for the message he bore was one of evils days to come. During the crisis of the eighth century, Isaiah, his mind full of the grand conception of Zion's inviolability, could unite in his preaching the accents of the patriot and the remonstrances of the Prophet. Now Jehovah's patience was exhausted, and the *dies irae* had dawned. The Prophet to whom it fell to sound the ill-omened note was bound to appear in the eyes of all as a traitor to his country, to his God and to the most legitimate expectations of the faith of Israel. And so, from a merely worldly point of view, Jeremiah was doomed. But in reality, his hopeless mission gives his character a stamp all its own and without a rival in history. His work has not the grandeur of Isaiah's, and his influence on his contemporaries falls far short of Ezekiel's. But he possesses this superiority over either, that he was the Prophet of suffering, that he understood the necessity of a new covenant to create the true Israel, that that covenant would have as its indispensable condition the

existence is not warranted by our historical data. Besides, this view would detract much from the dignity and value of the Code; for after all, it was the Prophets who were Jehovah's representatives.

Suppose for a moment that Kittel is right. Then in view of such an antagonism, how do we account for the events of Josiah's reforms? The *Book of Deuteronomy* was found. Hilkiyah, the high priest, took it to the king, consulted the prophetess Huldah, and at the king's bidding purified the Temple and its worship, and inaugurated a great religious reform. And yet that book, of which Hilkiyah, the high priest, made himself the champion, was written in the Prophetic spirit, was totally different from the Priestly Code in its point of view and its aims, and knew nothing of a centralized worship or a Levitical hierarchy.

Clearly, there are serious difficulties in the way of accepting the priority of the Priestly Code to *Deuteronomy*. See Appendix VI.

individual conversion of the heart, and that that conversion could only be brought about in the furnace of affliction. The clear vision that the society of Jehovah's followers would be formed in direct opposition to the temporal interests of the chosen people, and that its birth would be attended with suffering, made Jeremiah the forerunner of the "Second Isaiah" and the first harbinger of the Gospel era.

Meanwhile Jeremiah, as soon as he was called by Jehovah, without as yet foreseeing the issue of the conflict he was entering, and only dismayed at his own youthfulness and the greatness of his task, set himself courageously to work. The close affinity between his literary work and Moses' discourse in the fields of Moab would suffice to show that Josiah's reforms sprang from *Deuteronomy*, and that Jeremiah was one of its chief champions. It has been sufficient to make more than one critic take Hilkiyah the high priest for Jeremiah's father and Jeremiah for the author of the "Moabite Code."<sup>1</sup> Those are random assertions which M. Duhm has disposed of in his *Theology of the Prophets*.<sup>2</sup> But the fact remains that Jeremiah knew *Deuteronomy*,<sup>3</sup> that he drew his inspiration from it and even imitated it,<sup>4</sup> and that he contributed, to the best of his power, to the triumph of the reformation undertaken by Josiah :

"Hear ye the words of this covenant,  
And speak unto the men of Judah  
And to the inhabitants of Jerusalem ;

<sup>1</sup> In the former case Hilkiyah, the high priest, has been confused with Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth, and the father of Jeremiah (*Jer.* i. 1). See Zunz and Colenso.

<sup>2</sup> Duhm, *Theol. d. Profeten*, 1875, p. 195 and foll., p. 241 and foll.

<sup>3</sup> Not only is Jeremiah the earliest of the Prophets to make a reference to a *written law*, but, when he does so, his words are clearly borrowed from *Deuteronomy* (cf. *Jerem.* xxxii. 11, xlv. 10, 23, with *Deut.* iv. 45, vi. 17, 20, etc.). The laws to which he alludes are taken from the Moabite Code (comp. *Jerem.* iii. 1, 8, with *Deut.* xxiv. 1; and *Jer.* xxxiv. 8, with *Deut.* xv. 12; and *Jer.* xxviii. 9, with *Deut.* xviii. 21).

<sup>4</sup> Compare *Jer.* vii. 23, xxxviii. 20, xl. 9, xlii. 6, with *Deut.* v. 16, 26, vi. 3, 18, xii. 25, 28, xxii. 7; *Jer.* ii. 20, iii. 6, 13, with *Deut.* xii. 2; *Jer.* vii. 33, with *Deut.* xxviii. 26.

The most striking instance of all is the similarity between *Deut.* xxviii. 49-53 and *Jer.* v. 14-17 (cf. also vi. 22, vi. 13, iv. 13).

And say thou unto them,  
 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel :  
 Cursed be the man that heareth not the words of this  
     covenant,  
 Which I commanded your fathers  
 In the day that I brought them forth out of the land of  
     Egypt,  
 Out of the iron furnace,  
 Saying, Obey my voice, and do them,  
 According to all which I command you :  
 So shall ye be my people,  
 And I will be your God :  
 That I may establish the oath  
 Which I swear unto your fathers,  
 To give them a land flowing with milk and honey,  
 As at this day.

. . . . .  
 Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah,  
 And in the streets of Jerusalem,  
 Saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant,  
 And do them."<sup>1</sup>

The opening chapters of his book seem to prove that Jeremiah cannot have been as pessimistic as Huldah, when the discovery of the "Code" and the severity of its threats were communicated to her.<sup>2</sup> True, he does not, any more than the Prophetess, underestimate the gravity of Judah's offence :

"Jehovah said unto me,  
 Backsliding Israel hath shown herself more righteous  
     than treacherous Judah."<sup>3</sup>

But he does not think the disease past healing ; the patience of God is not yet exhausted ; only, let man beware not to drive it to despair :

"For thus saith Jehovah to the men of Judah and to  
     Jerusalem,

<sup>1</sup> *Jer.* xi. 1. Jeremiah, though still too young to be a leader, evidently worked for the reformation and believed in it.

<sup>2</sup> Especially iii. 6—iv. 4 (cf. Renan, *Histoire d'Israel*, iii. p. 211).

<sup>3</sup> *Jer.* iii. 11.



Break up your fallow ground,  
 And sow not among thorns.  
 Circumcise yourselves to Jehovah,  
 And circumcise your heart,  
 Ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem ;  
 Lest my fury go forth like fire,  
 And burn that none can quench it,  
 Because of the evil of your doings." <sup>1</sup>

These burning reproaches, these threats and appeals, especially if the prophecies of Zephaniah and Nahum belong, as seems likely, to the same period,<sup>2</sup> must have made a salutary impression on the young king, opened his eyes to the decadence of his people, and prepared him for the truly astonishing work of the reformation of 622 B.C. The importance of this restoration has certainly been exaggerated: it was much rather an ecclesiastical revolution, managed by the leading men, than an awakening of the human conscience among the people at large. However, the revolution which was so mysterious in its origin and so magnificent in execution, for a moment deceived the Prophet into thinking that the day of God had come. "Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"<sup>3</sup> The longing of Jehovah must at that moment have been also the prayer of Jeremiah. But it is easier to clean a temple than to purify a heart. The roots of religion were broken: it produced a few hasty blossoms, but the sap failed and the flowers bore no fruit.

Political events soon proved that religious excitement

<sup>1</sup> *Jer.* iv. 3, 4. Circumcision of the heart, *Jer.* iv. 4, ix. 26. Cf. *Deut.* x. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Nahum and Zephaniah mark the transition from Isaiah to Jeremiah. Remembering Isaiah's hopes of salvation, they saw in approaching events the sign of the coming of "the day of Jehovah." Zephaniah saw it in the appearance of the Scythians, Nahum in the siege of Nineveh.

Jeremiah saw with other eyes. Coming disasters foretold not the deliverance but the judgement of Zion. Judah was about to enter into tribulations, whence it should emerge purified.

<sup>3</sup> *Deut.* v. 29.

cannot take the place of repentance, and that a mere change of fanaticism is not sufficient to win the help of Jehovah. The empire of Assyria was in its decline. Weakened by the incursion of the Scythians, it had no longer sufficient strength to resist the attacks of Chaldaea. Pharaoh Necho II. was aware of it. As the heir of Egypt's ancient grudge against Assyria, he sprang forward to share the spoils with the Medes and Chaldaeans who were already blockading Nineveh. Josiah, as the faithful ally of Assyria, formed the mad project of arresting Necho's march. He knew that his troops could not stand before the might of Egypt, but he relied on the arm of Jehovah, and Jerusalem, sharing the elation of its king, felt sure of victory. The little army drew itself up on the plain of Megiddo, and there, in the fields where Deborah had sung, and where Bonaparte was one day to meet the Turks, Judah suffered a bloody defeat, which dashed its hopes to the ground, and was the prelude to its coming chastisement (609 B.C.). Josiah lay dead on the field. Physical confidence in Jehovah vanished for ever. The sceptre passed into the hands of Jehoiakim, a second Manasseh. Meanwhile Necho went up to the Euphrates. He was beaten at Carchemish (606 B.C.) by Nebuchadnezzar, who pursued and slew him. Jehoiakim let the storm pass, and changed his suzerain without a murmur. But misfortune had not taught him. He was too fond of pleasure to listen to anything which was to his real interest, and he wasted his money and patronized false prophets, who flattered the people and urged it to shake off the yoke of Babylon. In vain Jeremiah sought to stop Judah on the fatal slope of rebellion. The ultimatum which he brought the people in Jehovah's name raised the popular fury to its height. The priests insulted him, and he was dragged before the rulers, and escaped death only by a miracle.<sup>1</sup> From that moment all his hopes fell. The first part of his ministry was finished. He dictated to his faithful Baruch the summary of his speeches,<sup>2</sup> and set out on the decisive stage of his mission, in which, discarding every political preoccupation and illusion, he combated the

<sup>1</sup> *Jer.* xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. Jer.* xxxvi.

activity of the *Elohist*<sup>1</sup> Prophets, who were ever ready to announce the imminent arrival of Jehovah's aid, and set himself to preach submission to the judgement of God, obedience under the rod and the conversion of the heart as the indispensable condition of salvation and of the restoration of Israel. Judah was now in its death-throes. Jehoiakim, goaded by agitators within, and relying on the chimerical succour of Egypt, finally revolted against Nebuchadnezzar. The first effect of this act of folly was the irruption of the neighbouring Moabites, Ammonites and Syrians, who, under the cloak of loyalty to Chaldaea, swept over Judah with fire and sword. Nebuchadnezzar in his turn arrived on the scene and invested Jerusalem. Jehoiachin, the son and successor of Jehoiakim, who had died before the siege began, defended the city for three months, and then, being at his wits' end, surrendered the city and his own person unconditionally. He was immediately sent into exile. His court, princes and leading men of the country, with all the palace treasures, followed him to Babylon. Over his mutilated and ruined kingdom Nebuchadnezzar set up as king the youngest of Josiah's sons, Zedekiah, who was then twenty-one (599 B.C.). It seems as if the terrible lesson should have sufficed Judah. The contrary was the case. The survivors of the catastrophe, thinking that henceforward they had nothing more to fear from the vengeance of Jehovah, shrank from no folly. Jeremiah, whose sombre predictions had been fulfilled, regained a certain measure of popularity; but he was not listened to, when he began once more to counsel repentance and submission. The desire to break the yoke of Babylon haunted the minds of all; and men were resolved to stake their all at the first opportunity. This was supplied by Hophra, the grandson of Necho. Zedekiah joined Egypt, and a desperate struggle was resumed against

<sup>1</sup> By this we mean those Prophets who, without exactly meriting the epithet *false*, persisted in seeing in Jehovah no more than a protecting Elohim ever ready to help His people and to work for its material prosperity, whatever its moral state. These preachers, who showed more devotion to their country than to religion, always obtained a hearing when they counselled resistance or revolt. The *Jehovist* Prophets, sacrificing as they did politics to religion and material prosperity to spiritual fidelity, were regarded as bad citizens and slanderers of Israel.

Nebuchadnezzar. This time the Chaldeans hurried to the scene, determined on their part also to settle the matter and have done with it. They laid siege to Jerusalem, withdrew for a moment to defeat the Egyptian army, reappeared under the walls of Zion, reduced it after a siege of a year and a half, and set it on fire (587 B.C.). Zedekiah was captured and tried before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. He was blinded and carried away to Babylon with all that remained of men of note in the land. Jeremiah was offered the choice, and elected to remain in his wasted fatherland, where Nebuchadnezzar left Gedaliah as governor.

But the end was not yet. A few refugees, returning to Judah, crowned the bloody drama by murdering Gedaliah. At the news of this crime, the Jews left behind in the conquered country were seized with panic. They were in terror of the vengeance of Chaldaea, resolved to flee into Egypt and consulted Jeremiah. The Prophet made a last attempt to enforce the counsel of Jehovah: "If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up. . . . Be not afraid of the King of Babylon . . . for I am with you to save you and to deliver you from his hand."<sup>1</sup> But the people, led astray, decimated and ruined, were no longer capable of recognizing the voice of the protecting God Whom they had deserted. "Thou speakest falsely: Jehovah our God hath not sent thee to say, Ye shall not go into Egypt to sojourn there."<sup>2</sup> And so they resolved upon flight. Jeremiah would have wished to remain among the ruins which had buried his hopes while they justified his warnings. But this last boon was denied him. He was carried forcibly into exile and, according to the tradition, stoned by his fellow-countrymen. Such were the final agony and end of the little nation, whose misfortunes had equalled its bygone glories.

When we reconstruct the history of this century, during which the mistakes of the faithless nation were equalled only by the chastisements they brought in their train, and when we consider the concatenation of disasters which made this

<sup>1</sup> *Jer.* xlii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Jer.* xliii. 2.

century Judah's last, we are reminded of the inspired words : " See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil : . . . therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed : to love Jehovah thy God, to obey his voice and to cleave unto him." <sup>1</sup> And when we reflect that these words were spoken with reference to *Deuteronomy*, the effects of which Manasseh's reign completely thwarted, we can understand how the philosophy of the sad story could be summarized in such words as these : " Surely at the commandment of Jehovah came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did : and also for the innocent blood that he shed ; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood ; and Jehovah would not pardon." <sup>2</sup> No doubt, Josiah, the ardent follower of the ancient faith, revived on the throne the noble virtues of Hezekiah. But his reign was merely a lull in the storm. Jeremiah picked up the mantle of Isaiah, and his preaching was among the most powerful that ever sounded in Israel's ears, but Isaiah had obtained a hearing, and Jeremiah did not. When he foretold the wrath of Jehovah, men said, " Thou blasphemest." When he prophesied the fall of Jerusalem, they seized him to put him to death. The people of his own village of Anathoth, and even his own brothers did not believe in him. Alone among the great Prophets of Israel, he was for his age what Jesus was for His, an enigma and a stumbling-block. And when, the only " Seer " in the midst of a purblind race, he had lived through all the disasters he had foretold, endured all the humiliations he had not deserved, and shared all the misfortunes which he would have wished to spare his people ; when by excess of love he had gained only hate, his fellow-countrymen dragged him by main force into exile and made his martyrdom their revenge for the importunate preachings of the prophet of evil : " He came unto His own and they that were His own received Him not." If we fully grasp all this, we cannot be surprised if to Jesus' question, " Who do men say that I am ? " some of His disciples answered " Jeremiah." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Deut.* xxx. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *2 Kings* xxiv. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Matt.* xvi. 14.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE RELIGIOUS WORK OF THE PROPHETS OF THE TWO KINGDOMS.<sup>1</sup> THE SECOND ISAIAH.

LITERATURE OF THE LAST CENTURIES BEFORE THE EXILE:<sup>2</sup>—THE BOOK OF JOB.<sup>3</sup> THE BOOK OF PROVERBS—I. III. IV. VI. IX. X. XIV. XVI. XIX. XXI. XXV. *King Lemuel's Mother*—XXXI. *The Virtuous Woman*—XXXI. THE BOOK OF PSALMS. MICAH—IV. V. NAHUM—I. II. ZEPHANIAH—III. HABAKKUK—I. II. DESTRUCTION OF JUDAH—2 KINGS XXV. THE SECOND ISAIAH—IS. XL. XLI. XLII. LIX. LX. LXIII. LIII. LVII. LXV.

THE Babylonian captivity (586-536 B.C.) marks the end of the political existence of the people of Israel. If the success of the preaching of the Prophets, who were its spiritual guides, were bound up in its national prosperity, we should at this point have to acknowledge that the Prophets had failed. But their fight was not for a human cause. "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but

<sup>1</sup> Consult Darmesteter's *Les prophètes d'Israël*, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> The age of Isaiah was the golden age of Hebrew literature. To it belong *Deuteronomy*, *Job*, probably the *Song of Songs*, and the earliest collections of *Proverbs* and *Psalms*; also the prophecies of Micah (about 725 B.C.). In the following century we have Nahum (about 650 B.C.), Zephaniah (about 630 B.C.), and Habakkuk (about 608 B.C.).

<sup>3</sup> Elihu's speech (*Job* xxxii.-xxxvii.) is now generally admitted to be a later addition. It breaks the unity of the poem.

the things which are not seen are eternal.”<sup>1</sup> These words of St. Paul apply admirably to the work accomplished by the Prophets in Israel and Judah. Let us, before proceeding further, define the general character of that work, and show how, under the apparent defeats of God’s people, it reveals the spiritual victory of Jehovah. Amid the triumphs and reverses of the centuries which witnessed their rise, the Prophets, representing the cause of Jehovah, did not busy themselves with founding any particular kingdom. They laboured for the birth of the human soul. It was through them that, in the beautiful words of Isaiah and St. Paul, Jehovah “spread out his hands all the day unto a rebellious people.”<sup>2</sup> Their doctrine and that of the little flock which, thanks to them, did not bow the knee to Baal, could be summarized in the words of *Deuteronomy*, “Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”<sup>3</sup> Repentance for sin, humility before God, faith, conversion and life, these were the foundations of the religion they proclaimed. They announced the coming of the redeeming Messiah, and, while St. Paul repeated in his body the sufferings of Christ, the martyrdom of his fore-runners the Prophets was a prelude to the agony of the Cross.

Independent criticism is mistaken in thinking that it was only the Prophets who developed the moral content of the Hebrew religion. The Prophets only preached what Moses had received from God, and their function was to find a way into men’s hearts for the teaching of Revelation. Now—and this is a fact the proper consideration of which ought long ago to have set the Church in the way of our present-day solutions—the Decalogue, which epitomizes the Mosaic religion and lays down the conditions of communion with Jehovah, says never a word, in its Ten Commandments, about the external forms of worship or the celebration of sacrifices. Its purpose is far more exalted: it is to lead the Israelite to true religion, the religion of conscience and of *self-surrender*, which is the first and absolute condition of any worship pleasing to God. Accordingly Moses, with

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Is. lxxv. 2; Rom. x. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. vi. 5.

the grand task before him of founding the religion of Jehovah, that is to say, the inward religion of the heart, pays no attention to a class of external symbols which have from all time been used to express the religious instinct of humanity, and instead concentrates the whole force of his teaching upon the revealed truths destined to beget the religious life by restoring the proper relations between Creator, creature and creation.<sup>1</sup> This being so, the attitude of the Prophets towards the formalism of the Temple need puzzle us no longer. The Prophets were the apostles of revealed religion and built on the foundations laid by Moses. They understood that the priesthood, with its human ritual, was betraying the divine covenant and harking back to idolatry. For that reason they protested with all the energy at their command against the ever-growing tendency to enclose religion in the rites of a form of worship, and to reduce the worship to vain practices which appealed to the eyes and the imagination, but left the heart "uncircumcised." When Jesus wished to refute the Pharisees and make them understand that their religion, which was a tissue of human traditions, made void the Word of God, it was from the Prophet Isaiah that He borrowed His severest judgements :

" This people honoureth me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from me.  
But in vain do they worship me,  
Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere Jesus said : " There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope."<sup>3</sup>

The theme of the Prophetic preaching is extremely simple. It is this : *How shall the whole be sound, if the parts are rotten ?* How shall the nation be in a state of grace, if the citizens and the king be in a state of rebellion ? The Messianic Prophets draw up before Israel the catalogue of their shameful offences, and endeavour to make use of the experiences of the faithless and chastised nation so as to move the heart and awaken the conscience of the individual, and prove to each Israelite that the cause of the nation's

<sup>1</sup> See *P's.* i. 7-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Mark* vii. 6 ; *Is.* xxix. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *John* v. 45.



undoing is to be found precisely in citizens like him. Had not Jehovah given Israel His law, as the charter of the covenant? Now, ever since the days of Moses, the life of the children of Israel had been merely a tissue of sins, transgressing successively all the commandments of the Ten Words. They had worshipped other Elohim under the eyes of Jehovah, offering incense to Baal, and their sons to Moloch, and building altars to the gods of Egypt and Assyria. They had surrendered their hearts to every superstition, serving *teraphim*, erecting pillars, practising magic like the Philistines, and performing unspeakable rites under oaks and terebinths to idols. Israel, by failing to obey the will of Jehovah, showed a lack of trust in the power of His name. They made void the Name of Jehovah by allying themselves with His adversaries, alternately imploring the aid of Egypt and Assyria and scorning the counsel of the Prophets. "Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from Jehovah, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Ye turn things upside down! Shall the potter be counted as clay, that the thing made should say of him that made it, He made me not; or the thing framed say of him that framed it, He hath no understanding?"<sup>1</sup> Israel did not sanctify its rest any more than it had sanctified its work. The Sabbath was profaned, and became a heathen feast, and the work of the six days was continued on the seventh, as if Jehovah had never spoken.<sup>2</sup> Israel was as immoral in its life as it was in its religion. "The son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house."<sup>3</sup> Unnatural vices defiled the paternal hearth.<sup>4</sup> Everywhere was nothing but perjury and lying, murders, thefts and adulteries; murder followed on the heels of

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* xxix. 15, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1; *Jer.* ii. 18, xii. 2, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Jer.* xvii. 24, 26; *Is.* i. 13; *Ez.* xx. 13, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Micah* vii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Amos* ii. 7.

murder.<sup>1</sup> Palaces were filled with the fruit of violence and rapine.<sup>2</sup> Men "turned judgement into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood."<sup>3</sup> "And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage."<sup>4</sup> Men indeed called "evil good and good evil."<sup>5</sup> There is the whole list of the commandments complete, and all of them denied in principle. "Run ye to and fro," says Jeremiah, "in the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, and seeketh truth; and I will pardon her. And though they say, As Jehovah liveth; surely they swear falsely."<sup>6</sup> Perhaps, reflects the prophet, the common people sin from ignorance. Let us go to the great ones who have knowledge. The great ones are worse, through their brutality and luxurious living. "When I had fed them to the full, they committed adultery, and assembled themselves in troops at the harlots' houses."<sup>7</sup> Conscience knew no law, and wickedness no shame: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die."<sup>8</sup>

So low, according to the witness of its Prophets, had Israel, God's people, sunk, and that through its own fault. Nor was this all. Israel, while shaking off the yoke of the divine law, did not in the least mean to sever its connexion with God! Jehovah was the almighty Elohim, the Elohim of Israel! To seal the national consecration and to obtain His favours, Israel performed religious service in Jehovah's honour. A magnificent temple was erected to Him, His altars were all of gold, incense was burnt to him, loaves offered to Him, He was filled with the fat of rams and calves, and a solemn clergy, in gorgeous vestments, poured before Him the blood of burnt offerings. He ordained feasts, levied tithes, celebrated fasts, called together assemblies and initiated Israel into the sacred rites of moons and holy sabbaths. . . . What god was as great as Jehovah?

<sup>1</sup> *Hos.* iv. 1.<sup>2</sup> *Hos.* iii. 10.<sup>3</sup> *Amos* vi. 12.<sup>4</sup> *Micah* ii. 2.<sup>5</sup> *Isaiah* v. 20.<sup>6</sup> *Jer.* v. 1.<sup>7</sup> *Jer.* v. 7.<sup>8</sup> *Is.* xxii. 13. Cf. *Amos* iv. 4, vi. 4, viii. 4; *Hos.* iv. 11, vii. 5; *Is.* iii. 16, v. 11, xxxii. 9; *Jer.* v. 7; *Job* xxiv. 15, xxxi. 9, etc.

Or what worship could boast a splendour equal to His? It is the contrast between what Israel refuses Jehovah and what it gives Him which stirs the Prophets' hottest indignation. The apostles of conscience cannot endure the monkey-tricks of a religion of lies. Preaching as they do a religion which seeks the salvation of the creature through communion with the Creator, and the glory of the Creator through the submission of the creature, they are beside themselves with indignation at the practices of an easy-going "*Elohism*" which reduces religion to mere forms and expects to win divine favour by gifts and litanies. The Prophets' attitude towards the sacrifices of the established religion shows their inspiration at its highest, and gives the final touch to the full revelation of the religious and moral bearing of their work of reformation. Amos leads the way with these strong words :

I hate, I despise your feasts,  
And I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.  
Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings,

I will not accept them :  
Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

Smite the chapters, that the thresholds may shake ;  
And break them in pieces on the head of all of them ;  
And I will slay the last of them with the sword :  
There shall not one of them flee away,  
And there shall not one of them escape.  
Though they dig into hell,  
Thence shall mine hand take them ;  
And though they climb up to heaven,  
Thence will I bring them down.

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs ;  
For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.  
But let judgement roll down as waters,  
And righteousness as a mighty stream.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Amos* iv. v. ix.

## 326 HONESTY BETTER THAN SACRIFICE

In a word, honesty pure and simple is more precious in the eyes of Jehovah than all the religious ceremonies and sacrifices in the world. Isaiah takes the same view half-a-century after Amos :

Wash you, make you clean ;  
Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ;  
Cease to do evil ;  
Learn to do well ;  
Seek judgement, relieve the oppressed,  
Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.<sup>1</sup>

The Prophets are not setting morality and religion in opposition to each other : the worship of Israel was as void of real religion as its private life was of morality :

Is it to bow down his head as a rush,  
And to spread sackcloth and ashes under him ?  
Wilt thou call this a fast,  
And an acceptable day to Jehovah ?  
Is not this the fast that I have chosen ?  
To loose the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the bands of the yoke,  
And to let the oppressed go free,  
And that ye break every yoke ?  
Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,  
And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ?  
When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ;  
And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ?  
Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,  
And thy healing shall spring forth speedily.

. . . . .  
Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah shall answer ;  
Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.<sup>2</sup>

If only Israel could plead, as an excuse for its formal worship, that these forms themselves were ordered by God, and that the burnt offerings, fasts and assemblies were enjoined by the law of Jehovah. But it has not even this

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* i. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Is.* lviii. 5.

excuse. Israel, of its own accord, so as to make itself a religion after its own standard, lowered the revealed religion to the level of pagan worships. Moses, in the Decalogue, had taught *Jehovism*, a religion which demands the surrender of self to God ; but Israel, preferring to follow its own ideas and keep its heart to itself, fell back into *Elohism*—that is, natural religion—which showers gifts upon God, but leaves the heart “uncircumcised.” The world had travelled a long way from the days of Mosaic religiousness. “When Israel was yet a child, I loved him,” said Jehovah ; and He might add, “his worship, at Sinai, had not the splendour of yours.”<sup>1</sup>

Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings  
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel ?<sup>2</sup>  
For I spake not unto your fathers,  
Nor commanded them,  
In the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt,  
Concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices :  
But this thing I commanded them, saying,  
Hearken unto my voice,  
And I will be your God,  
And ye shall be my people.<sup>3</sup>

Words like these, if properly considered, are precise and decisive and cast a significant light, if not on the contents, at any rate on the omissions of the Mosaic revelation. We must not infer from these quotations that the Prophets were opposed to the Temple and its sacrifices on principle. If that were so, how should we explain the fact that *Deuteronomy* struck all its roots in Prophetic soil, and that Jeremiah prays for the day when men will come from Judah and Benjamin, from the mountains and from the south, to bring burnt offerings and offer thanks in the house of Jehovah ? But they looked upon sacrifices as we now do, for instance, upon gifts of money, which, we consider, are meaningless if they are mere alms, but full of meaning if they are the expression of true charity. In the same way, sacrifice and ritual are acceptable and possess religious meaning only if the worshipper has previously satisfied the divine demands by giving

<sup>1</sup> *Hos.* xi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Amos* v. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Jer.* vii. 22.

his heart to God and giving himself up to fulfil the will of God. For whom was the elaborate legislation of *Deuteronomy*, with its Temple and its rejoicings before Jehovah, intended? For a new people, previously converted, and loving God with all its heart, with all its soul and with all its might. When, according to Jeremiah, will Jehovah take pleasure in burnt offerings? When Israel, having been chastened, will have been *converted*, and when God, moved with compassion, will bring back Jacob from exile and make the new covenant with him. *Be converted or die!* was the ultimatum of the Prophets to the chosen race, its priests and its kings: and its sound was the more terrifying since political events hastened every day its appalling fulfilment. “Repent! . . . the axe is already laid at the root of the tree.” . . . The last Prophets of Judah, Jeremiah and Zephaniah, developed for the salvation of the nation the theme which in after years John the Baptist insisted on for the salvation of the individual. By dint of stirring men’s consciences, Prophecy awoke in a few a feeling of remorse. But remorse in itself is not enough.

Wherewithal shall I come before Jehovah,  
 And bow myself before the high God?  
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
 With calves of a year old?  
 Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,  
 Or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?  
 Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,  
 The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

And Micah replies to the conscience-stricken formalist:

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;  
 And what doth Jehovah require of thee,  
 But to do justly, and to love mercy,  
 And to walk humbly with thy God?<sup>1</sup>

Thus the preaching of the Prophets centres round the conscience-stricken sinner. Sacrifice in itself was no longer for Moses an act of worship, nor was it for his successors the Prophets an act of atonement. God requires the heart: He loves and wishes to be loved.

<sup>1</sup> *Mic.* vi. 6.

There exists a disposition to think the Prophets too severe and the blows they deal at Israel's unbelief too heavy. The reason is that they are as uncompromising as love itself, and that their book sets before us, all quivering with love and pity, the heart of the Creator yearning for His creature. Open the book at its very first pages : " Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband ; for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and multiplied unto her silver and gold, which they used for Baal. Therefore will I take back my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will pluck away my wool and my flax which should have covered her nakedness. . . . And I will lay waste her vines and her fig-trees, whereof she has said, These are my hire that my lovers have given me ; and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. . . . Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope : and she shall make answer there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> . . . I taught Ephraim to go ; I took them on my arms ; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. . . . How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? . . . Mine heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim : for I am God, and not man."<sup>2</sup> Thus the Prophet Hosea in passionate lyrics unveils the secret motive of the divine actions. The supreme, creative word is spoken : Love. God acts because He loves. Hosea was followed by Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk, who all said to Israel : God acts because He loves. He created because He loves, He revealed Himself because He loves, He chastised because He loves, He wishes to save because He loves. With love, all is clear : without love, all is in vain. Herein, O Israel, lies thy offence and also thy hope, that God is Love.

<sup>1</sup> *Hos.* ii. 7.<sup>2</sup> *Hos.* xi. 3.

Such was the preaching of the Prophets. Its purpose was to make immanent in man the opposition between the will of the spirit and the will of the flesh, the will of the Creator and that of the creature. We must understand all this before we can really grasp the tragic significance of the claims, appeals, reproaches, threats, the scorns and entreaties, the violence and the poetry, the tenderness and the cruelty of the Prophetic discourses, in which God's love, alternately invoked and insulted by men, commands and implores, punishes and blesses, sighs and exults, and labours to bring into the world the feeling by which the world must be saved, that is, the love of the creature for its Creator. The labour was not wasted. But to break those stony hearts, it needed three centuries of the anger of God! To prove to Israel that, apart from the love of Jehovah, nothing can exist, required foreign wars, domestic struggles, corruption among the people, and tyranny on the throne, the fall of Samaria, the capture of Jerusalem, the ruin of the Temple, and the blotting out of the nation in exile and the bitterness of tears. Every time that a disaster occurred, or a fresh catastrophe lighted upon Israel, the Prophets, those implacable witnesses of the judgements of God, stood up and cried: It came to pass because you would not be converted. Nothing could draw them away from their one thought. The form of their speech varied with the events and their indignation grew with the gravity of the offence or men's unconsciousness of their peril, but the substance of it did not change, and its purpose was always the same. Had they, according to circumstances, defended Jehovah against Baal, good against evil, the poor against the rich, they would be great with the greatness of all champions of good causes in every age; but their unique place in history and the unique character of their work among mankind, are due to their unfailing maintenance of their language at a level where all subjects become merged and epitomized in the single proposition, "*Israel's ingratitude is the cause of all its misery.*" Their preaching is as broad as the human conscience and as deep as the love of God, and on every occasion brings the whole man to judgement in its eloquent indignation. Nothing can disarm or escape it or



turn it from its purpose. It goes straight as a sword, as the sword of the Spirit, searching the hearts and reins of men. It approaches in turn politics, justice, morality, divine worship and religion, and summons every sin to its tribunal, not to combat them singly, but to enclose them all in one appalling whole. It sheds light from one upon another, traces the effect to its cause, seeks the sinner behind the sin, and, gathering up all his offences into one, cries to the heart of man, “Thou hast not loved God!”

As the traveller, after climbing a steep ascent, sees spread out below him the path he has trodden, so the Israelite who has climbed to the height of the Prophetic revelation, turns and scans the road behind him. He sees all the heaped-up ruins, all the degradations undergone and faults committed, his disgraces, his weaknesses, his folly and his misfortunes, extending in a long unbroken chain right back to one beginning and one only, his hardness of heart. He sees all that he has lost by the light of what he might have gained; for it is God’s love that gives him light for the gloomy retrospect. Despised promises, neglected appeals, unrecognized blessings and broken commandments mark every stage of his journey and tell the story of his life-long ingratitude and disobedience. Confronted by reality, man feels that the fault is his; that God’s will was good, but his own bad, that the love of Jehovah was faithful but Israel faithless. And he repents:

“I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus,  
Thou has chastised me, and I was chastised,  
As a calf unaccustomed to the yoke:  
Turn thou me, and I shall be turned;  
For thou art Jehovah my God.  
Surely after that I was turned, I repented;  
And after that I was instructed,  
I smote upon my thigh;  
I was ashamed, yea, even confounded,  
Because I did bear the reproach of my youth.”<sup>1</sup>

All is over: the work of *Jehovism* is done. *The union of*

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxi. 18.

*morality and religion* has, under the influence of repentance, produced in men's hearts the germ which will make it possible for man at last to live. True, in the course of the slow initiation to the religion of Jehovah, *Elohimism* had not laid down its arms. From the day when Amos scandalized the priest of Bethel and earned the reputation of a conspirator and visionary, the opposition continued to grow. But while the priests were preparing the Messiah's Cross, the Prophets were preparing His cradle. That cradle was the little group of humble believers, waiting for the consolation of Israel, from whom in the fulness of time were to proceed Anna, Elizabeth, the pious Simeon, John the Baptist and Mary, the mother of the Saviour Jesus. Chastened gradually and enlightened under the ordeals of the divine education, the little flock came to understand that what God requires is not the gorgeous ceremonies or sacrifices of an external worship, but the repentance and conversion, the self-surrender, piety and moral service of an internal religion, in which the sinner trusts himself to the grace of Jehovah, responds to His love by love, and becomes the instrument of His will. Driven back into the last entrenchments of his evil nature, moved by the terrible and touching eloquence of those preachers of repentance, and convinced both of his sin and of the futility of the means offered by the official religion for satisfying the demands of the divine law, the sinner wished to raise himself again, and to return to favour. But a prohibition lay heavy on him; a chain, whose weight he had never before felt, kept him still the slave of evil. His will, his heart, his conscience itself, were sick. Unaided he could easily enough offer rams and he-goats, but surrender himself he could not. Whence would succour come? Whence the infusion of new blood? What redeemer would pay the ransom of the guilty and reconcile Israel with Jehovah? Then he cried aloud to Jehovah and besought Him to act:

<sup>1</sup> O Jehovah, thou art our father;  
 We are the clay, and thou our potter;  
 And we all are the work of thy hand.

<sup>1</sup> *Zs.* lxiv. 8.

Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah,  
Neither remember iniquity for ever. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Return for thy servants' sake,  
The tribes of thine inheritance. . . .

<sup>2</sup> Return, O Jehovah, how long?  
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants. . . .

<sup>3</sup> Heal me, O Jehovah, and I shall be healed;  
Save me, and I shall be saved. . . .

Jehovah consented to act and take the first step. All His advances up to that hour had no other purpose but to make man feel that he was lost if God did not take the first step, and to make him implore God to take the first step towards his salvation. The day when from an Israelite heart there arose the cry, "Lord, save me!" the moral conditions of regeneration were fulfilled. To that cry God made answer:

<sup>4</sup> Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,  
Saith your God.  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,  
And cry unto her,  
That her warfare is accomplished,  
That her iniquity is pardoned;  
That she hath received of the hand of Jehovah  
Double for all her sins.  
The voice of one that crieth,

Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah,  
Make straight in the desert a high way for our God.

Strange! The man entrusted with the sublime task of preparing a way in the wilderness, and of completing and crowning the Prophetic revelation, has left no name and no memorial in history. The poems in which he announces to the world a universal deliverance, salvation by faith and the atoning efficacy of the sufferings of a Righteous One giving His life for sinners, have been preserved for us in the closing pages of the *Book of Isaiah*, and were attributed to the son of Amoz, till the day when science and faith with their better information disposed of the historical heresy.<sup>5</sup> Where was

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* lxiii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ps.* xc. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Jer.* xvii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Is.* xl. 1.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix V. The Second Isaiah.

the home of the inspired singer of *Isaiah* xl.-lxvi.? The current opinion is that he lived during the Captivity and was Ezekiel's companion in misfortune and successor. But his ideas do not harmonize with the aspirations or the theology of the spiritual guide of the exiles: so that the obscurity surrounding his identity is only deepened by the hypothesis, which besides is quite gratuitous, of his residence in Chaldaea. Every difficulty disappears, on the other hand, if we look for him in the wasted land of Palestine, in the solitudes which had once echoed to the preaching of Jeremiah, and where men's hearts were still under the spell of the life, trials and martyrdom of that man of sorrows. It was not Ezekiel but far rather Jeremiah whose work the "Second Isaiah" took up and carried on. He was indebted to the Prophet of Anathoth not only for the principles of his theology, but also for the vision of his great Hero. He who has "trodden the wine-press alone," the "despised and rejected of men," the man whom the world "esteemed not," is no doubt a sublime inspiration, a prophecy of the Redeeming Messiah, . . . but it is also a reminiscence, a portrait of the imprisoned, beaten and martyred Prophet. And it was through the person of Jeremiah that the author of the "Fifth Gospel," as the "Second Isaiah" has been named, saw and hailed afar off the divine Martyr of the Cross. While Ezekiel, in exile, proclaimed that the restoration of the people would come from without, at the bidding of Jehovah, for the honour of His name,<sup>1</sup> the "Second Isaiah" insisted that salvation must come from within. In his view, everything is subordinate to the idea of reconciliation and expiatory suffering. No doubt, forgiveness comes from God; but religious and moral regeneration, which is the condition of forgiveness, will not come by magic. Their sin has been too great, and their ways too crooked for a renewal of the people to be possible without a political upheaval, or a conversion of the heart without a profound disturbance calling into play all the moral energy, devotion and sufferings of the men who value that salvation. A man must have felt that he was dying, to feel the beginning of a new life. . . . The new man must

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xxxix. 7.

have passed through the fiery furnace. And, as in the great crises of social existence it is always the good who suffer for the evil and save them, prophetic inspiration and the remembrance of Jeremiah gradually raise the "Second Isaiah" from the notion of a whole nation's misfortunes to that of the sufferings and mediation of the faithful section of Israel, and from the sorrows of that collective servant to the substitution in their place of the expiatory sufferings of the individual Servant, *Ebed-Jahve*, the Servant of Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> The latter takes upon Himself the sins of the whole people, suffers and dies in its stead and brings it the covenant of grace, with its accompanying benefits—the conversion of Israel, the regeneration of the nations and transfiguration of the whole of creation.<sup>2</sup>

Just as on Mount Moriah the religion of *Elohim* surpassed itself in producing an act, the sacrifice of Isaac, which potentially contained the religion of Jehovah; so here the latter surpasses itself in its turn and gives to the world of the Old Covenant a foretaste of the New.<sup>3</sup> It has caught a lightning glimpse of the Man of Sorrows: a mystery for the redeemed who worship the crucified Saviour in the light of the Gospel, but a far greater mystery then amid the darkness which enveloped the Prophet of the Captivity. Nor are we surprised to hear on the lips of the "Second Isaiah" and of St. Paul—in whom we may see the symbols of the Old and the New Covenants—the same cry of adoration, mingled with a confession of powerlessness: "Verily thou

<sup>1</sup> There appears to be no sufficient reason to doubt that all the chapters, *Is.* xl.-lxvi., are by one author.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Renan, *Histoire d'Israel*, iii. p. 498. The early Prophets had announced to Israel that its national God would become the Universal God of the human race. In the Second Isaiah that idea is clear and consistent. The conversion of the Gentiles was to be the result of the fall of Babylon. Jehovah was to be worshipped by the whole world, and the universe was to be His sanctuary. Prayer would take the place of sacrifice. Cf. Vergil, *Ecl.* iv. and *Is.* lxxv. 17 and foll.

<sup>3</sup> "The anonymous prophet of 536 B.C. marked the close of three centuries of the greatest religious movement (Christianity excepted) of which we have any record. With him we stand on the mountain-peak from which we perceive Jesus on another, and between, a very deep depression" (Renan, *op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 501-2).

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art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.  
. . . O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the  
knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements,  
and his ways past tracing out!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Is.* xlv. 15; *Rom.* xi. 33.

## PART THE SIXTH.

### THE MESSIAH REJECTED.

#### INTRODUCTION.

THE religious spiritualism of Messianic Prophecy had been to such a degree effective that, if the time marked out by divine wisdom for the advent of the Messiah had been fulfilled, and if Jesus had made His appearance among the group of zealots surrounding the "Second Isaiah," and had proclaimed the Gospel as He did later at Nazareth and Jericho: "To-day is the word of the prophet fulfilled: The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," . . .<sup>1</sup> He would have been received without the need of John the Baptist. Three centuries of Prophecy had made the rough places plain. But the ideal form of the Servant of Jehovah remained on the distant horizon, like a gleam of hope; for the general conditions of the establishment of God's kingdom on earth had not yet been realized. How came it that the Prophetic movement did not continue, and that no seer arose to develop the teaching of the "Second Isaiah," as the "Second Isaiah" had completed that of his predecessors? Why, instead of founding a school, did the singer of the Servant of Jehovah remain alone in his glory? No one took up his mantle. The two or three lesser Prophets who came after him were busy with other thoughts. Judaism came into being outside the reach of his influence. So much so, that, when five centuries later the day of Christ was about to

<sup>1</sup> *Mark* x. 45.

dawn, a fore-runner was required to awaken in men's hearts the long-silent echoes of the preaching of repentance, by summarizing in his teachings in the wilderness the doctrine of the prophets of old. He was taken for a madman;<sup>1</sup> and when Jesus came to fulfil the law and realize the words of the Prophets, the official representatives of the Israelite religion could not rest till they had put him to death. This is a religious and moral puzzle which traditional theology has never solved. To plead that it is a mystery would be shirking the difficulty; for we here have to deal with a series of facts and the evolution of a nation which lived its life in the full light of history. The transformation of evangelical Christianity into Roman Catholicism is no mystery to us; for impartial study of the first centuries of the Church's existence has shown us its successive stages and yielded up the secret of its origin. And the transformation of Hebrew Spiritualism into Judaic *Levitism*,<sup>2</sup> which led to analogous results, admits of a similar explanation and obeys similar laws. No one can tell us when Roman Catholicism began, or at what precise moment in history the official representatives of the New Covenant ceased to maintain the souls entrusted to their care in the pure doctrine of the Revelation. Nor can we lay down the exact date of the beginning of the deterioration under the Old Covenant. But in the same way that it is possible to trace to such and such an event or prominent character of the first centuries of Christianity the tendencies whose development was to culminate in the Roman Church, so we can trace to the Captivity in Babylon and to Ezekiel, priest and Prophet, the origin, if not of Judaism, at any rate of the tendencies which were to produce it.

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xi. 18.

<sup>2</sup> By *Levitism* is meant what would nowadays be called *clericalism*.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY AND THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

THE LAMENT OF THE EXILES:—(1) *Lamentations* i. ii. iii. v.<sup>1</sup>  
(2) *Psalms* LXXIX. CXXXVII. CXXX. CXXVI. CXXVII. CXXI.  
(3) *Obadiah*.<sup>2</sup> EZEKIEL:<sup>3</sup> His Call—EZEK. I.-III. His Difficulties—EZEK. XXXIII. The Prophet's Duties—EZEK. XXXIII. Rebuke to the Shepherds of Israel—EZEK. XXXIV. The Outpouring of the Spirit—EZEK. XXXVII. The Blessings of the New Covenant, The Living Waters—EZEK. XLVII.

THE period of the Captivity is generally considered as one of intellectual and religious torpor. The history of Israel breaks off in 586 B.C. and is resumed in 536. In the interval the captives are pictured as turning the mill-stones at Babylon, as Samson did among the Philistines; and that half century of history is labelled with the two words formerly

<sup>1</sup> The *Book of Lamentations*, ascribed by the lxx to Jeremiah, is a collection of poems highly finished but unequal in merit, and apparently the work of several authors. The persistent ascription of all these pieces to Jeremiah gives us a false notion of Jeremiah's vigorous character and style.

<sup>2</sup> Obadiah is earlier than Joel (cf. *Obad.* xvii. and *Joel* ii. 32), but later than all the Prophets who preached before the fall of Jerusalem (*Obad.* 10-14), though not much later. Of the author personally nothing is known. The name means "servant of Jehovah."

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel began his ministry about the time that Jerusalem fell. He accompanied the exiles, and preached from 594 to 560 B.C., at Tel-Abib, near the river Chebar, in Babylonia. The nation had ceased to exist. His appeal was addressed to the individual. He pleaded marvellously for conversion, but unfortunately he was a priest, and the last part of his book contains a scheme of restoration of a highly sacerdotal character, which paved the way for the triumph of the priests over the Prophets.

seen on maps of the Dark Continent: *Terra Incognita*. M. Gautier, in his beautiful work on the mission of the Prophet Ezekiel,<sup>1</sup> brings out ably the true character of the period, and shows us through the descriptions of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, the exiles of the Chebar founding their Israelite settlements on the banks of the river, without being in the least disturbed, building houses, cultivating fields and reviving at Tel-Abib the customs and civilization of Jerusalem. True, the more enlightened science of to-day now assigns a large share in the religious restoration of Israel to those Judaeans who had not quitted the hills of Palestine. What we have said above of the "Second Isaiah" sufficiently shows that we agree with this more rational view of history. But the fact remains that, from the political and sacerdotal point of view, the little nation of captives contained and monopolized in the land of exile whatever was capable of exerting any influence on the mother-country either through social position, or genius, or eloquence or faith. Remember that that diminutive chosen people, ripened by its bitter experience, was ceaselessly maintained by the preaching of the Prophets in a proper consciousness of its extraordinary privileges:—it was the shoot destined to carry on the life of the tree; the chosen race, the heir of the promises, was embodied in it alone; the eyes of Jehovah were no longer turned towards Zion, but were bent on Tel-Abib, to see in what manner the new man would emerge from the fiery furnace, and how the exiles were preparing the cradle of the Israel to come.<sup>2</sup> We can readily understand how, among men like these, during a half-century of freedom which was all the greater for the cessation

<sup>1</sup> Gautier, *La mission du prophète Ezéchiel*, 1891, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> The exiles are as a branch severed from the stem of the tree. But the branch is sound, while the stem is rotten. They are the swarm which has left the hive, and which will found a thriving kingdom when the inmates of the old hive have ceased to live.

Jeremiah agrees with Ezekiel, and shows in striking imagery that it is among the exiles at Babylon that the new star of Israel must arise. See *Jerem.* xxiv., the vision of the two baskets of figs, in which the good figs stand for the exiles at Babylon, and the bad for "Zedekiah . . . and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land Egypt." Cf. *Jer.* xxix. 16-19. The centre of gravity of God's people had been shifted.

of all political interests, this stimulating thought called into being a whole literature quivering with the great memories and the great expectations of Israel.

We admire, and rightly too, the history of a people torn from its native land, and removed to a pagan country, and yet preserving sufficient vitality in itself to spring into new life after a lapse of more than half a century, to return as with a pilgrim's staff to a land it had left in a captive's chains, and, though a mere handful of men set down upon a heap of ruins, to rebuild entirely from the foundations new walls and a new nation, fit, a hundred years later, to fill once more a glorious page in the volume of the world's history. But besides admiring we must understand. The sublime revival yields up its secret only if we regard the Captivity as a period fruitful and blessed above all others; as a crisis planned by God to lead to a necessary transformation.<sup>1</sup> It was inevitable that the larva should be shut up in the chrysalis to form silently and secretly the wings of the perfect butterfly. That chrysalis was the Captivity. For the Kingdom to become the Church, it was necessary that a long sojourn far from the land of its birth should break up the old traditions unsuited to a new age;<sup>2</sup> and that a season of meditation and faith should permit of the elaboration of the plans, laws and vital organization of the new Jerusalem,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Renan, *Histoire d'Israel*, vol. iii. p. 388. The Israelites now cared nothing for war or politics. The secular classes had received their death-blow; the following of the Prophets, on the other hand, was more vigorous than ever. All this was the work of the Babylonian captivity. The court and the army, for ever opposed to the Prophets, were wiped out. The Levites preserved their devotion to religion, and they were numerous. It was a critical moment. And out of the great ordeal grew a new nation whose vigour was as real and intense as it had ever been.

<sup>2</sup> See Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 1888, vol. ii. pp. 13, 14. For two centuries the Prophets had foretold the fall of Jerusalem, and now it had come to pass. Jehovah claimed the work of destruction as His own. The fall of Jerusalem took place, according to Ezekiel, that Israel might know that "I am Jehovah" (*Ezek.* xxiv. 24, vi. 7, 13, xii. 16, xv. 7, xxxiii. 29). The chastisement announced by the Prophets was carried out. Thenceforward all opposition to the Prophets was doomed. The Prophets were clearly the only spokesmen of Jehovah. They therefore became the only pilots of the fortunes of Israel. The real leader of this movement was Ezekiel.

and of the charter of the future. It is in the sense of the necessity of preparing for better days, joined to the patriot's fear of seeing the traditional heritage lost in the days of storms and stress, that we must look for the inspiration which moved Ezekiel, "the spiritual guide of the exiles," and the poets who awakened in their psalms the echoes of *Lamentations*,

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept,  
When we remembered thee, O Zion . . .

and, finally, the writers and compilers of all sorts, lawyers, scholars, historians, obscure but fervent patriots, who contributed each his stone to the re-building, and among whom lived the editor of the great historical work mentioned in our preface, which pursues its narrative through the most ancient portions of the Pentateuch, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel* and *Kings*.<sup>1</sup>

The period of the Captivity is overshadowed by the commanding figure of the Prophet Ezekiel. He had been carried off in 599 B.C., eleven years before the downfall of Jerusalem, and welcomed the exiles on the banks of the Chebar and set about moulding the new nation. He was the first to dream of a restoration, and was vouchsafed visions of the constitution of the theocracy of the future. He was the man of the hour, in the crisis which transformed the nation into a church and Hebraism into Judaism. He was both an end and a beginning. He left his impress on the turning-point of his country's history. What direction would he give it? What was his conception of the future relations of religion and law? As priest and Prophet, he was better qualified than any to know what had been and to plan what was to be. It is high time we laid aside the idea that Ezekiel was an "arm-chair" Prophet and that his book is that of a visionary. Visions certainly he did see, but they remind us much less of those of Daniel or St. John than of those of Moses on Mount Sinai. Like Moses, Ezekiel had a nation to form for the conquest of the promised land; his visions

<sup>1</sup>There is every reason to believe that *Deuteronomy* existed in its present form when the exiles returned to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. The finishing touches must therefore have been given to it during the captivity in Babylon.

were intended to confirm him in his vocation and to reveal to him in its main outlines the programme of the future nation. He was in the land of exile what Moses had been in the wilderness, the spiritual father of God's people. A glance at his book will convince us of it. The first part, which is devoted to preaching, prophecies and parables, shows us Ezekiel foretelling and explaining the causes of the fall of Jerusalem, the punishment of its kings and the execution of the terrible threats pronounced in God's name by unheeded Prophets. "Son of man, say unto her, Thou art a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst thereof. Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey; to shed blood, and to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest gain. And their prophets have daubed for them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity and divining lies unto them. . . . Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I brought upon their heads."<sup>1</sup>

"Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

"And thou, O deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of the end; thus saith Jehovah: Remove the mitre, and take off the crown: this shall be no more the same: exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it." . . .<sup>3</sup>

However, all hope will not vanish. "If we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself." . . .<sup>4</sup> "When

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xxii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xxiv. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezek.* xxi. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *2 Tim.* ii. 13.

I send my four sore judgements upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine and the noisome beasts and the pestilence, . . . yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be carried forth." . . .<sup>1</sup>

That "remnant" is to be the exiles of Tel-Abib and Babylon. When the ministers of the divine vengeance have been chastised in turn, and the nations of Syria, Tyre and Sidon, and Egypt, and all the enemies who rejoiced at Israel's misfortunes, have been humbled in the dust;<sup>2</sup> what will be the character of that nation whose restoration is prophesied by both Ezekiel and Obadiah, a people called back to life by the voice of the Most High, as an army might rise again whose dry bones have lain bleaching in the valley?<sup>3</sup>

Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob,  
And have mercy upon the whole house of Israel ;  
And I will be jealous for my holy name.  
And they shall bear their shame,  
And all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed  
against me,  
When they shall dwell securely in their land,  
And none shall make them afraid ; . . .  
Neither will I hide my face any more from them :  
For I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel,  
Saith the Lord Jehovah.<sup>4</sup>

We might expect to find here a theory of the kingdom of God, a programme of spiritual activity. The negative portion of Ezekiel's work was full of power ; for it rested securely on the basis of the *Jehovist* principle, viz.: the union of morality and religion in the service of Jehovah. It called for a positive portion in which the Prophet should have sketched for his people the lines to be followed by Jehovah's kingdom, the normal life of the subject of that kingdom, the religion of conscience and moral obedience, which should make Israel the witness of the Life-God in the world and the home and centre of all that was good. But there is nothing of the sort to be found in the restoration contem-

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xiv. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ezek.* xxv.-xxxii. xxxv. xxxviii.-xxxix. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezek.* xxxvii. 1-14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xxxix. 25.

plated by Ezekiel. The Prophet's preaching is followed by a priest's programme. Ezekiel is commissioned to give Israel its new code of laws, and is carried in the spirit into a high mountain, and there, like a Second Moses on a new Horeb, the Prophet receives the revelation which is to be the charter of the New Israel. The proportions of the second Temple, the laws concerning the Prince, priests, Levites, altar, sacrifices, feasts and distribution of land, are successively revealed to him. And these are no symbolical visions or allegories whose mysterious meaning concerns the Messianic times; they constitute a programme destined, in Ezekiel's mind, to be realized literally. Jehovah says to him: "Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee; for to the intent that I might show them unto thee art thou brought hither; declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

"Thou, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, make known unto them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight: that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. Behold, this is the law of the house. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

"And these are the measures of the altar. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

"These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon." . . .<sup>4</sup>

There can be no two interpretations of such language. Ezekiel's intention certainly was to write, under God's guidance, the charter of the Restoration. If he heaped up the ruins in the first part of his book, thundered out reproaches and lavished dazzling promises, it was because he wished to make the exiles understand that the former things were passed away and all things were made new,<sup>5</sup> and that, like

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xl. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xliii. 10-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezek.* xliii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xliii. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Rev.* xxi. 4-5.

the river of living waters which would spring from the Temple and carry prosperity in its stream,<sup>1</sup> the laws which he revealed to them would be the channel of grace and the seal of the covenant of peace which Jehovah wished to make with the reconciled nation.

What then are the laws which are to be the basis of the future organization of the people returned from exile? Israel is to have in future one only sanctuary, a building of magnificent dimensions, minutely described by Ezekiel,<sup>2</sup> and which must be erected not on the site of the ancient Jerusalem, which has fallen for ever from its lofty pinnacle of glory, but on the summit of a very high mountain,<sup>3</sup> round which there will be a new distribution of land for the twelve tribes, gathered around like a flock around its shepherd. Strange cults and priests are banished from the new Temple,<sup>4</sup> which is entrusted to the keeping of the Levites. But among the Levites, the sons of Zadok alone have the right to draw near Jehovah.<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel gives as the reason for this distinction that, as all the Prophets before him were agreed, all the Levitical families had polluted themselves by taking part in idolatrous worships.<sup>6</sup> Alone among them all, the family of Zadok, the first priest of Solomon's Temple, had never sacrificed to idols.

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xlvii. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> Of the three Temples mentioned in the Old Testament, Ezekiel's would be the easiest to reconstruct. For Solomon's see *Kings* and *Chronicles*; for that of the restoration of 536 B.C. see *Ezra* and *Haggai*.

Ezekiel's plans are complete. It is impossible to believe that he did not hope for a literal fulfilment of his dream. He believed as firmly in the erection of his Temple as in the restoration of the exiles.

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel's Temple, instead of being an integral part of the city, rises solitary, a little to the north, on a priestly site, and on "a very high mountain" (xl. 2; cf. xliii. 12). The holy city will not be on the same site or bear the same name as the old Jerusalem. It will be in the centre of the land and be called Jehovah-shammah (*Ezek.* xlviii. 35), "Jehovah is there."

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 6-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 15-16. Ezekiel does not mention Aaron in his scheme. But the Jews of the second Temple considered it certain that Zadok was descended from Aaron (1 *Chron.* vi. 1-15, xxiv. 1-6). When the Priestly Code mentions *sons of Aaron* instead of *sons of Zadok*, it means the same as Ezekiel, only takes care to show the direct connection of the priestly hierarchy with the Mosaic institutions.

<sup>6</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 10, xlviii. 11.



It is to be rewarded for its loyalty by receiving the priesthood. The other Levites are to be punished for their apostasy by being for ever excluded from priests' privileges: henceforth they must be their brothers' servants.<sup>1</sup> The priests, the sons of Zadok, shall draw near to the holy places, offer "the fat and the blood,"<sup>2</sup> eat the most holy things,<sup>3</sup> and officiate in public sacrifices.<sup>4</sup> They shall have besides the task of teaching the people to distinguish the holy from the common and the clean from the unclean; they shall observe laws and feasts, judge quarrels and sanctify the Sabbath.<sup>5</sup> They shall be set apart and sanctified for the service of Jehovah, and shall in their priestly functions, wear linen tires on their heads and linen garments.<sup>6</sup> They must be careful not to soil any of these holy garments with sweat<sup>7</sup> and to take them off before going out into the outer court, "that they sanctify not the people."<sup>8</sup> The priest must not shave his head, but only poll it;<sup>9</sup> he must not drink wine before entering into the inner court.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, he must marry none but a virgin of the house of Israel, or else a priest's widow,<sup>11</sup> and must not draw near any dead person, except his father, mother, son, daughter, brother or unmarried sister. In these cases he may only resume his service after an interval of seven days, after offering a sin offering for himself.<sup>12</sup> The Levites are not subjected to these regulations and are reduced to subordinate functions. They keep the doors,<sup>13</sup> and have "the ministering in the house,"<sup>14</sup> assist individuals in their voluntary sacrifices<sup>15</sup> and prepare in the kitchens the flesh of the victims offered by the people.<sup>16</sup> While the priests are to live in houses close to the sanctuary, the Levites are to be distributed in villages at a distance,<sup>17</sup> and, as the lands assigned to each of the two castes are equal, the family of Zadok by this mere fact will be very much favoured. Yet Ezekiel's legislation gives it still further

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 11-14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xliii. 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 21.

<sup>13</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 17-27.

<sup>8</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 22.

<sup>14</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 11, 14.

<sup>17</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 3-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezek.* xlii. 13.

<sup>6</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 17, 18.

<sup>9</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 20.

<sup>12</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 25-27.

<sup>15</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 11.

sources of revenue. All the parts of offerings and sacrifices not consumed on the altar are to be the food of the priests. "Every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs." Lastly, they shall receive firstfruits of all fruits, the first of the dough and of every heave offering.<sup>1</sup> As for the Levites, it seems that the revenues of their lands were their only maintenance.

After the sanctuary, priests and Levites, Ezekiel proceeds to regulate the sacrifices. He institutes a daily burnt offering of a lamb one year old, without blemish. Morning by morning is it to be prepared with an offering of oil, by a perpetual ordinance.<sup>2</sup> He introduces into the laws, besides the *olah* and the *zebach-shelamim*, two classes of sacrifices unknown to the old kingdom, which the misfortunes of the people punished for its offences have produced in the land of exile,<sup>3</sup> viz. : the sin offering and the guilt offering.<sup>4</sup> On the subject of feasts and holidays, Ezekiel indicates very precisely the ceremonial to be observed. The gate of the court, which is closed during the week, is open on the Sabbaths and new moons.<sup>5</sup> The Prince, the second David, who in the new kingdom must combine the functions of king and priest,<sup>6</sup> shall "give the burnt offerings, and the meal offerings, and the drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel."<sup>7</sup> On the Sabbath he shall offer six lambs, one ram and the meal offering.<sup>8</sup> In the day of the new moon, it shall be a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs and a ram, and a meal offering.<sup>9</sup> On the first day of the first month of the year the sanctuary is to be cleansed by sprinkling of blood ;<sup>10</sup> and on the seventh day

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 28-30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel does no more than mention these sacrifices and assign them a place in his scheme. The Priestly Code details them, but does not explain their origin. Probably the idea of these sin and guilt offerings had arisen during the exile, under the heavy blows of misfortune foretold by the Prophets. If only Jehovah would rebuild Zion, gratitude would be mingled with repentance in His people's sacrifices. See *Ps.* li. 18, 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xl. 39, xlii. 13, xliii. 19, xlv. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ezek.* xliv. 3, xlv. 7, xlv. Cf. xxxiv. 24, xxxvii. 24, xlv. 7-8, xlv. 13, xlv. 2, 11, xlv. 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 18.

of the same month there is to be a similar ceremony for involuntary sins.<sup>1</sup> The Passover is to be kept on the fourteenth day of the first month; the feast to last seven days, the days of unleavened bread, during which the Prince is to offer every day seven bullocks, seven rams and a he-goat for a sin offering.<sup>2</sup> On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, on the feast of Succoth,<sup>3</sup> he shall offer during seven days the same sin offerings, the same burnt offerings, and the same meal offerings.<sup>4</sup>

Such in Ezekiel's laws is the organization of the worship and the priesthood. One thing at the outset surprises us in the new legislative programme. Ezekiel makes no mention of Moses, and in his proposed religious restoration takes no account of the Mosaic institutions contained in the Priestly Code. Can it be that he is opposed to the spirit which dictated the *Elohists* legislation? On the contrary, he writes in the same spirit. Was the organization of the Levitical worship inadequate to the demands of the community? Everybody knows that *Leviticus* was chosen, in preference to Ezekiel's proposals, to become the ritual of the second Temple. The Prophet's silence about *Deuteronomy* is explained by the difference of time and subject. *Deuteronomy*, which was then in everybody's memory, contained the moral injunctions of Moses, and did not concern itself with the regulation of ceremonies. Ezekiel's proposals, dealing with the organization of the worship, could be appended to it and complete it without contradicting it. But such is not the case with the Priestly Code, whose minute ritual satisfies Ezekiel's longings, but cannot agree with the Prophet's new regulations. The absence of a high-priest and the allotment of the high-priesthood to the Prince, is one of the touches which seem to us conclusive proof that Ezekiel elaborated his system of resto-

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 21-24.

<sup>3</sup> *Levit.* xxiii. 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 25.

The devotion to minutiae of ritual gave birth to the *Priestly Code* (or *Elohists* legislation) alluded to in the Preface. This Priestly Code, it will be remembered, embraces the legal portions of the great work of priestly history extending from *Genesis* i. to *Nehemiah*. The essential parts of it are in *Exodus* xxxv.-xl., *Leviticus* and *Numbers* i.-x.

ration without being in the least degree bound by sacred traditions to the laws of the Priestly Code. It has been said that Ezekiel knew of the high-priesthood and suppressed it designedly, because, in his picture of the future theocracy, religious supremacy belongs to the Prince. We readily allow that if the institution of a high-priest did not yet exist in the laws—as was the case in the time of *Deuteronomy*—Ezekiel was free and even anxious to abolish the office of Minister of Religion, to confer the high-priesthood on the Prince. In a theocracy worthy of the name, temporal and spiritual power must perforce overlap. But to pretend that Ezekiel, a priest learned in the laws of Moses and jealous for the maintenance of the sacerdotal legislation, deliberately broke the chain of Aaron's successors, to put in the high-priest's place a 'Prince' with uncertain powers and more like a Pope than a king, would be crediting the son of Buzi with inconceivable hardihood, giving a most arbitrary interpretation to his silence and gratuitously isolating him in a Utopia which both past experience and future requirements render equally improbable. If, on the contrary, we suppose that Ezekiel's silence on the subject of Moses and his ritual is due to the fact that the Priestly Code was unknown to him, the institution of a "Prince-priest" is perfectly natural. The suppression of the monarchy, after long centuries of kings and the promises made to David, would have seemed to the Prophet an impossibility and a sacrilege; on the other hand, the sacerdotal conception governing his whole plan of restoration forced him logically to cast the future kingdom in the form of a religious community and to view the Prince in the character of a high-priest.

The hypothesis we have just put forward on the subject of one particular point, leads us to regard Ezekiel's legislation as a first step towards the "*Elohism*" legislation. His project, with its Prince-priest, would seem to mark the transition between *Deuteronomy*, whose king is purely temporal, and the Priestly Code with its pure hierocracy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In *Deuteronomy*, the King has nothing in common with the priest (xvii.). In *Ezekiel*, the King performs the functions of the priest (xlv). In the Priestly Code, the priest takes the place of the King.

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Now this is precisely the conclusion to which we are led by a close study and comparison of the various legislations. As regards the sanctuary, *Deuteronomy* demands a single place of worship, Ezekiel's project realizes the condition, and the Priestly Code develops its rites, assuming the single sanctuary as an accomplished fact. Sacrifices, though more legal and more official in *Ezekiel* than in *Deuteronomy*, are for all that less rich and less numerous than in the Priestly Code. *Deuteronomy* knows nothing of a daily burnt offering: Ezekiel establishes one for the morning: the Priestly Code adds to this another for the evening.<sup>1</sup> Sin offerings, which are unknown in *Deuteronomy*, make their appearance in Ezekiel's project, and in the Priestly Code are given a special definition and a complete ritual. Speaking generally, the spontaneous and voluntary character of the sacrifices, which is very prominent in *Deuteronomy* and almost entirely obliterated in the Priestly Code, is still fairly evident in Ezekiel's legislative projects. The feast-day offerings, which according to *Deuteronomy* are voluntary, are already subjected to a form of ritual in the Prophet's visions; but they are much less sumptuous in *Ezekiel* than in the Priestly Code, and the accompanying regulations are different and simpler.<sup>2</sup> The cycle of feasts, more complete in *Ezekiel* than in *Deuteronomy*, which knows only of the three great popular feasts of ancient Israel, is less complete than in the Priestly Code.<sup>3</sup> However, the sabbatical system is already outlined.<sup>4</sup> The great day of Atonement, the central feast of Judaism, does not exist in *Deuteronomy*. In *Ezekiel*, the feast of the seventh day of the first month, as it were, fore-

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Ezek.* xlvi. 13-15, with *Exod.* xxix. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. and xlvi. Cf. *Num.* xxviii.

<sup>3</sup> See *Ezek.* xlv. 21. Here, as elsewhere, Ezekiel fills an intermediate place between *Deuteronomy* and the Priestly Code. For instance, for the feast of Passover, *Deuteronomy* ordered sacrifices only for the first of the seven days. Ezekiel instituted burnt offerings throughout the seven days; and the Priestly Code followed suit. Again, the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread were treated in the Priestly Code as two distinct things. But in *Ezekiel* and *Deuteronomy* they are a single feast lasting seven days.

<sup>4</sup> Note the predominance of the number 7, the institutions of *Ezek.* xlvi. 4-7, and the importance attached to the Sabbath in *Ezek.* xx. 12, 20.

shadows it;<sup>1</sup> while the Priestly Code establishes it and gives it laws.<sup>2</sup> The regulations concerning priests and Levites show, if possible, still more plainly the intermediate position held by Ezekiel's legislation between the Deuteronomic and Priestly Codes. In *Deuteronomy* there is no hierarchy: priests and Levites are all one. The Priestly Code, on the contrary, assumes the distinction of the two castes as an accomplished fact, and always treats the Levites as the servants of the priests. How are we to explain the contradiction? Ezekiel tells us that, to the time of the Captivity, all Levites were admitted to the priesthood, and gives the reasons why this shall no longer be the case. Just as we know through the Prophetic writings that the faithfulness of the sons of Levi won them the privilege of consecration to Jehovah,<sup>3</sup> so we know through Ezekiel that, in the future kingdom, analogous selection will limit the priesthood to the family of Zadok.<sup>4</sup> Thus the riddle is solved, and the Priestly Code, by setting a high-priest at the head of the clergy, is simply crowning the hierarchic structure erected by Ezekiel. In *Deuteronomy*, the clergy are commended to the kind attentions of the faithful; their position is so precarious that they have to be allowed a share in the triennial tithes levied on behalf of widows and orphans.<sup>5</sup> In *Ezekiel*, their future is assured; but the Levites enjoy nothing beyond the income of their lands, and the occasional income from the priests' dues does not amount to much.<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel as yet knows nothing of the tithes or of the forty-eight towns of the Levites.<sup>7</sup> The Priestly Code completes the hierocratic character of the future constitution by bestowing on the now all-powerful clergy the munificent revenues that we know.

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Num.* xxix. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Exod.* xxxii. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 6-16. Cf. the threats in *1 Sam.* ii. 27-36; cf. *1 Kings* ii. 27.

<sup>5</sup> *Deut.* xii. 19, xiv. 27, xxvi. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ezek.* xlv. 28-30, xlv. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Is it likely that Ezekiel, being a priest, suppressed on his own authority the tithes which were the chief source of the clergy's income, and with a stroke of the pen secularized the forty-eight towns given to the Levites by Moses? Such reforms would be directly opposed to the tendencies and intentions of the Prophet. It is obvious that the Priestly Code was not yet in existence when Ezekiel worked out his scheme. Had it been, he could not thus have disregarded it.

Our premisses seem to justify the following conclusion : it is impossible to admit that Ezekiel, on his own authority and without any allusion to the fact, upset, impoverished and mutilated the Priestly Code, and it is in an equal degree clear that we must regard that *Elohistic* Code as a free development of the laws of Ezekiel. The intermediate position occupied by the great Prophet of the Captivity in legislative matters throws a flood of light on the commanding influence exercised by Ezekiel on the progress of Israel's religious ideas. Ezekiel's scheme differs from *Deuteronomy* not only in the facts and in its organization, but also and especially in its spirit. In departing from *Deuteronomy*, or rather in using it as a starting point for the development of a ritualist legislation, Ezekiel breaks with the Prophetic Tradition, prepares the way for the transformation of Hebraism into Judaism, and explains the appearance of the Priestly Code. When the son of Buzi was starting on his career, the stern spiritualism of his forerunners, the Prophets, had just won a signal triumph. The ruin of Jerusalem and its Temple proved to the world that the word of Jehovah, spoken by the mouth of His servants, was certain and true. The Prophets had demanded the reformation of a carnal and formal worship ; they had preached conversion and life, declaring that if the people did not abandon its errors and renounce its idolatrous practices, it would be destroyed and blotted out from the roll of the nations. The people did not believe, and the threat was carried out. Israel, stripped of its altars and removed to a far country, was forced to acknowledge the truth of the prophecy and to perform in its abasement the worship of a "broken and contrite" heart. The respect felt at that moment for the words of the dead Prophets may be imagined. A tardy homage was done their memory, and the credit enjoyed by Ezekiel was increased by the reputation of his great predecessors. As the religious hero of a period when the Prophet's task was to fashion out of the ruins of the ancient the materials of the future nation, Ezekiel might be expected to use the influence accruing to him from the realization of prophecy to take up again the moral opposition of his predecessors, to strike a decisive blow at the formalism of the

Temple, and to deprive a carnal worship, expressed in lifeless rites, of any chance, or even faint desire, of return. Now was the time to open to the eyes of a humbled Israel the treasures of the Prophetic preaching: to set forth the religion of the *Jehovist*, which "will have mercy and not sacrifice";<sup>1</sup> to explain the meaning of the "circumcision of the heart"<sup>2</sup> required by *Deuteronomy*; and to inaugurate a new era by the proclamation of the worship "in spirit and truth," which recognizes no boundaries and demands the conversion of hearts rather than the building of altars. By adopting this attitude, Ezekiel would have added to the temporal victory just won for the Prophets by the fulfilment of their threats the spiritual triumph of their revealed doctrine. . . . But, no doubt, the hour of "the true worshippers"<sup>3</sup> was not yet come. The times were not ripe for preparing the way of the Messiah. With His never-failing respect for human liberty, God wished Israel to reap to the full the harvest of what it had sown and to add to the lessons of history the more inward and more profitable experience of its moral impotence in the field of pure religion. Ezekiel caught a glimpse of the greatness of his task. He too utters the decisive cry, "Turn yourselves and live!"<sup>4</sup> which is an epitome of all the teaching of the Prophets. He was the first to define clearly and decisively the rights and responsibilities of the individual conscience;<sup>5</sup> and there was none among the Prophets who foresaw better than he the blessings of the Gospel.<sup>6</sup> But he did not dwell on these things, and in his picture of the restoration, which is the object and conclusion of his book, he came down again from the spiritual heights to which his prophetic inspiration had raised him. He was divided between the instincts of the priest and the impulses of the Prophet, and did not follow the example of Jeremiah, who like him was both priest and Prophet. In Jeremiah's case, the priest was lost behind the Prophet; in Ezekiel's, the Prophet spoke first, and spoke with

<sup>1</sup> *Hos.* vi. 6.<sup>2</sup> *Deut.* x. 16. Cf. *Jerem.* iv. 4, ix. 26.<sup>3</sup> *John* iv. 23.<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xviii. 32.<sup>5</sup> *Ezek.* xviii. and xxxiii.<sup>6</sup> E.g. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26-27. Cf. xxxvii. 26, 27, and xxxiv. 12-16; *Pss.* xxiii. 1; *John* x., etc. And again see xxxiii. 11; cf. xviii. 30-32.



incomparable beauty and force ; but the priestly predilections, which at first had been entirely suppressed, gradually regained control, and the closing chapters of his book are the work of a priest.

The battle fought by the Prophets through three long centuries was lost. The religious thought of Israel, which had been kept alive by the ardent spiritualism of the Prophets, reached its final stage under the guidance of Ezekiel, towards whom, in that unique moment, the eyes of all the faithful were turned.<sup>1</sup> God's chastisements had come ; how would His promises be fulfilled ? Jerusalem had fallen ; how was she to rise again from her ruins ? What form were Israel's hopes to assume ? The ideal held out to the captives by the Prophet was no longer merely a nation of brothers, each of whom, in the beautiful words of *Deuteronomy*, was to "love God with all his heart, with all his soul and with all his might," but, above all, a community gathered round a Temple and expressing its adoration by the performance of prescribed rites. What was God's purpose in the restoration of Israel ? It was to convert a nation and through it to send the Gospel into all the world : so said the Prophets of old. But the idea of the new programme<sup>2</sup> was that God's purpose was to separate a nation, raise it above all others and use it to reveal His power. The reinstatement of the "remnant" in the land and privileges of their forefathers was no longer described as the result of a return to favour or an answer to prayers of repentance. Ezekiel made it the means selected by Jehovah to save the honour

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ezek.* viii. 1, xiv. 1, xx. 1, xxxiii. 1-33.

<sup>2</sup> The universalism which so deeply tinged the Messianic expectations of the great Prophets is entirely absent from the preaching of Ezekiel. The fine passages quoted above (note 6, p. 354) concern the people of Israel only, and it were idle to look in *Ezekiel* for any statement concerning the future of foreign nations and their eventual inclusion in the covenant of grace.

The original idea of the Prophets was that all the nations of the earth would be blessed in Abraham. According to Ezekiel and the new school, all God's promises are exclusively reserved for the chosen people, selected by God to reveal His glory and power in the world. That idea, flattering as it was to the national pride, was eagerly accepted by Judaism, and found its fullest expression in the haughty exclusiveness of the sect of Pharisees.

of "his holy name."<sup>1</sup> That being so, the previous conversion demanded by the Prophets ceased to be a "*sine qua non*." The restoration must be brought about so that the nations might learn "that I am Jehovah."

It was therefore not surprising that ritual filled such an important place in worship; for rites were the outward forms of the bond uniting Jehovah and His people. Israel existed no longer merely for its *moral mission*, but existed on the strength of *social privilege*. And this privilege it was which the new worship was to emphasize. God no longer considered merely the thoughts of the faithful. The nation which He restored out of jealousy for "his holy name," must offer Him magnificent service. He took an interest in the forms of worship, ordered the people to erect a splendid building, organized imposing sacrifices and defined in minute laws the official relations between Himself and His people.<sup>2</sup> The ceremonies of divine service were henceforward an institution with a definite meaning and value all their own, quite independent of the inward disposition of those taking

<sup>1</sup> *Ezek.* xxxvi. 21. The earlier Prophets had said: "If from thence [the land of exile] ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou search after him with all thy heart and with all thy soul . . . When thou shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey his voice . . . with all thine heart and with all thy soul; then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee" (*Deut.* iv. 29, xxx. 2, 3; cf. *Jerem.* xxix. 11).

But according to Ezekiel, the object of the restoration is quite different. "I scattered them among the nations . . . men said of them, These are the people of Jehovah and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name . . . Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name . . . and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah" (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 19-23).

The contrast between the two points of view is characteristic. In the parable of the dry bones (*Ezek.* xxxvii.), the restoration of Israel is presented not as an answer to prayer but as a striking display of Jehovah's omnipotence, intended to open His people's eyes. Ch. xx. insists that Israel's repentance will be not the cause but the result of the restoration (xx. 39-44).

It is impossible not to feel that in Ezekiel the restoration of Israel is much more a national than a religious event. It is inspired by political ambitions, not by love of God or a desire for the conversion of His people.

<sup>2</sup> See xl.-xlv. and cf. xx. 40. "There will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things."

part in them. Righteousness tended to reduce itself merely to the strict observance of religious duties. The door was opened wide to formalism and the errors of the doctrine of *opus operatum*. True, in Ezekiel's mind, form is not found without substance, and the men who to-day accuse the Prophet of clericalism forget the moral elevation and religious enthusiasm of the pages which precede and introduce his visions. But, though it may be unfair to make him responsible for the consequences of his system, it is none the less true that Ezekiel has been deservedly called "the spiritual father of the post-exilic Jewish community, and of men like Ezra and Nehemiah." Now, in that community, the priest was to take the place of the Prophet, and external worship was gradually to supplant the religion of the heart. The people, deprived of a temporal chief, and possessing no freedom but freedom to worship as it chose, gathered round its Levites and concentrated all its thoughts on the ceremonies of the sanctuary. Instead of clashing, as in the days of the Prophets, politics and religion pursued a common end, and combined to organize a worship at once stern and formal, whose legal rigour and patriotic pride were its chief elements, and which went on developing its natural consequences and corrupting its ways, from Ezra's restoration to the Judaism of the Maccabees and from the Judaism of the Maccabees to the Pharisaism of the age of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "Second Isaiah" was in advance of his age. The priestly influence of Ezekiel's writings had turned the minds of the exiles to less exalted and spiritual modes of thought. Ezekiel was the father of official Judaism: the "Second Isaiah" of those who in humility and prayer waited for the "consolation of Israel." Thus the school of Ezekiel produced the Pharisees; the "Second Isaiah" a Simeon.

We may call the "Second Isaiah" the last of the Prophets. Of the post-exilic Prophets, Haggai and Zechariah deal almost exclusively with the re-building of the Temple; and marks of *Levitism* already appear in Malachi.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY. THE PRIESTLY CODE OF THE SECOND TEMPLE. EZRA AND NEHEMIAH ESTABLISH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

THE RETURN FROM EXILE—EZRA I. VI.<sup>1</sup> ISRAEL'S GRATITUDE—PS. CXXVI. CXXVII. CXXV. CXXIX, CIII. (adapted). THE POST-EXILIC PROPHETS :<sup>2</sup> HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH IV. VI-VIII. DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE—EZRA VI. 14-22. THE JEWISH COMMUNITY ORGANIZED :<sup>3</sup> EZRA'S REFORMS—EZRA VII-X. NEHEMIAH—NEH. I. AND VIII-X. THE LAST PROPHETS :<sup>4</sup> MALACHI, JOEL.

EZEKIEL introduced us to a period in which the thoughts which gave birth to the ritual of the second Temple were

<sup>1</sup> In 538 B.C. Cyrus published his edict authorizing the Israelites to return to Palestine and re-build their Temple. A caravan of 40,000 men returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel and the priest Jeshua. But their labours were interrupted by the annoyances of their Samaritan neighbours, whose assistance they had refused.

<sup>2</sup> Seventeen years after the return from Babylon, the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah, son of Iddo, by their exhortations renewed the zeal of their fellow-countrymen (520 B.C.). Zerubbabel and Jeshua undertook the re-building of the Temple, which occupied forty years.

<sup>3</sup> In 458 B.C. a fresh caravan of 1500 Jews under Ezra left Babylon to join the colony at Jerusalem. Ezra brought with him the body of laws drawn up by the priests during the exile, and undertook to enforce them. Thirteen years later, in 445 B.C., Nehemiah, King Artaxerxes' cupbearer, arrived to lend him support. Together they persuaded the people to re-build the walls of Jerusalem, made a census, and promulgated a constitution. The assembled nation listened to the reading of the Levitical laws, sanctioned their ordinances, feasts and taxes ( $\frac{1}{3}$  of a shekel for the service of the Temple), and revived on this new priestly basis their covenant with Jehovah (444 B.C.). Such was the foundation of Judaism.

<sup>4</sup> Malachi and Joel, who were Nehemiah's contemporaries, were deeply influenced by the priestly organization and ritualistic worship of the newly established Jewish

quite natural. Once they had started on the road to ritualism, the exiles did not confine themselves to the Prophet's programme. Nor could they have done so, for events quickly showed that it was unrealizable. Ezekiel's projects required as a first condition that the whole people should accept his prophecy; that not only the men of Jerusalem, but those of Samaria also should show a disposition to return to the holy land, and that a faithful prince, a second David, should arise to rally the twelve tribes and direct the exodus of the new Israel. Now, neither the reception accorded to Ezekiel's preaching nor the details which we possess about the return of the Jews to Palestine warrant us in thinking that true patriots continued for any length of time to hope for the restoration of Israel on the Prophet's magnificent scale. Ezekiel himself in his book shows us by the side of the group of believers who accept his testimony, a large number of sceptical, fickle or disheartened hearers whom his preaching leaves unmoved. He speaks and the crowds gather as they will one day around the Son of Man. Men run up to see him, and each one takes delight in hearing him, for he is to his people in exile a sweet singer, charming the ear and soothing the heart.<sup>1</sup> But when he appeals to the holy impulses of faith, how many arise at his call? Some, as soon as their curiosity is satisfied, laugh his stern reproaches to scorn: "What would this 'speaker of parables' with us?"<sup>2</sup> Others, at first allured by the Prophet's glowing eloquence, withdraw as soon as their perseverance is put to the test: "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth."<sup>3</sup> Others again, gripped by the recollection of past calamities and the care of present troubles, allow their fervour to cool and fall back murmuring: "The way of Jehovah is not equal:<sup>4</sup> the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."<sup>5</sup> Thus the exiled

community. They lay stress upon the externals of worship, the observance of rites, the payment of dues, and the quality of offerings, and hold up as the servants of Jehovah not the Prophets but the priests, the sons of Levi. Thus they represent the transition from the Prophetic to the Priestly supremacy.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 30-32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezek.* xxxiii. 31. Cf. xx. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezek.* xii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezek.* xviii. 25, 29, xxxiii. 17-20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ezek.* xviii. 2.

Prophet, like the Divine Sower of the Gospel, cast his seed by the wayside, on the rocky places, and among the thorns, and the last seeds only on the good ground, in which they yielded fruit.<sup>1</sup>

Let us return now to the days of deliverance (538 B.C.) following the promulgation of Cyrus' edict. With the partial failure of Ezekiel's preaching corresponds the relative miscarriage of the restoration of Israel. Where were the two heroic nations, which, after defending the holy land by a desperate struggle, hung up their harps on the willows by the Euphrates and wept for the loss of their altars? Where were the glittering descriptions of the return foretold by the "Second Isaiah"? The hour of the return had struck, but the soul of the nation felt no answering thrill. Half a century had sufficed to attach it to Babylon. Ephraim had disowned Jehovah. Judah with difficulty furnished a caravan, which was organized by the priests with Zerubbabel at their head. True, the pilgrims setting their faces homewards were prepared to dare and do, for the love of their God; but the hope they carried with them across the Syrian deserts was no longer to restore the ancient glory of Israel, nor to build in the midst of the restored tribes the sumptuous Temple projected by Ezekiel. No, with their present strength and resources, they were content if they could found a Church and raise again the ramparts of ancient Zion. On the ruins of the two nations which had for ever disappeared, the Jewish community alone revives the memory of their forefathers and sings to the Lord "a new song."<sup>2</sup>

The whole secret of the composition of the Priestly Code is contained in this transformation. Ezekiel had framed an elaborate ritual in view of the return of Israel and Judah *en masse*. His legislation, with its priestly inspiration, was part of a vaster scheme: that of a national restoration, re-uniting the two kingdoms under the same sceptre, and making the throne of David secure for ever. The men who sustained

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xiii. 4-23.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* xlii. 10. Cf. lii. 7-10. The "good tidings" are those brought to the Prophet in Palestine of the coming return of the exiles from Babylon. Cf. *I's.* xcvi. 1, xcviii. 1, xxxiii. 3, cxlix. 1.

the exiles' faith and endeavoured to prepare them to enter on the new era, soon saw that the Prophet's hopes would not be realized; that divisions and desertions left no hope of a national restoration. Accordingly, Ezekiel's legislative project was ill-adapted to the new times. It was necessary to take it in hand, adapt it to the circumstances, and gain credence for it among a people slow to believe what the Prophets had spoken, and to prepare for the future a form of worship all the more rigorous and fervent because it was no longer to be anything more than the outward symbol of a community of believers. The priests were buoyed up at the thought. As the dark days of the Captivity gave them leisure, they set valiantly to work. Ezekiel's project tallied with the aspirations of the clergy, and was used as the foundation for the new reforms. The priests and godly men assisting them in their work resolved to go back to the past in all essentials. Familiarity with the Temple of Solomon and its glories, which had acted so powerfully on Ezekiel's imagination, controlled their every thought. Ezekiel, in working out the details of the restoration of Israel's worship, could not imagine the resurrection of the religion of Jehovah except as an improved reproduction, a kind of glorification, of the Levitical worship organized by Zadok and his successors in the sanctuary at Jerusalem. His Temple accordingly was simply Solomon's projected into the future. The sinister influence of Solomon and his *Elohists* conception of religion carried all before it in the minds of the men who had been entrusted with reconstructing the Jewish nation, giving it laws and reviving the memories of its past. No doubt, behind the Prophet of the Captivity they felt the noble presence of the Prophet of the Wilderness. But, just as Ezekiel's Temple was simply Solomon's projected into the future, so the Tabernacle, as pictured by the scribes of Judaism, was merely the same Temple reflected backwards into the past. Was it not Moses who first saw in his mind's eye the inviolable sanctuary around which the hierarchy of faithful worshippers must some day be gathered? The problem created but not solved by the reforms of *Deuteronomy* was once more taken up. The Mosaic tradition was appealed to. All that the ancient

Temple had preserved of it intact was brought to light again ; changes, which had since become necessary, were introduced ; gaps were filled up and crooked things made straight. Finally, to crown the work of restoration, which was pursued with a courage and fervour but rarely seen in the history of religion, a comprehensive picture of the whole past of the chosen people was drawn, so as to revive the courage and zeal of the exiles, by showing them that from the foundation of the world the sole purpose of God was to create, purify and increase the little community of believers, to whom the new sanctuary was destined to assure the possession of the promises made to Abraham and Moses. Thus it was that the social, moral and universal kingdom intended and founded by Jehovah and His Prophets mis-carried and was perverted into an ecclesiastical community regarding itself as the sole guardian of the truth, the sole object of the divine election and the sole heir of salvation. The Church as a means became the Church as an object in itself, which at all times is the negation of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Such is the origin which the surest data of history would assign to the priestly legislation of the Pentateuch, which traditional theology attributes to Moses,<sup>1</sup> and whose ritualism exercised a very great influence on the Christian notion of the relations between man and God. The Levitical *Torah*, a work at once old and new, in which memories and aspirations, tradition and ideal, history and theology unite and mingle, does not exclude earlier legislation, but completes it. It does not pretend to be the work of Moses, but claims with the utmost sincerity to follow the lines of Moses' teaching. It was the fruit of a loyal effort to adapt the ancestral religion to the exigencies of a new age, and was, in its own time, the purest expression of Israelite patriotism. It united all the vital forces of the nation, and pointed all men's thoughts towards the one supreme goal : the re-building of the courts of Jehovah. The men who composed it were truly, in the difficult times in which they lived, the direct heirs of Moses, for it was they who decided their exiled countrymen to shake

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix VI. The Priestly Code.



off an unholy yoke and to set their faces again towards the desert to march once more to the conquest of the promised land. On that ground they deserve that we should see in their work something more than mere ritualistic minutiae or clerical encroachments. They deserve to be hailed as the patriots and believers whose indomitable faith in the divine promises saved the cradle of Christianity.

To return to history, we may thus picture to ourselves the course of events attending the return from the Captivity and the transformation of the Hebrew nation into the Jewish community :

“ When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion,  
We were like unto them that dream.”<sup>1</sup>

When the first Crusade set out to recover the Holy Sepulchre, the brave pilgrims also thought they dreamed, and their pious illusions turned every steeple rising on the horizon into an outpost of the towers of the Holy City. Dreams like these are short-lived ; they end in a rude awakening, and the brighter the illusion, the more disappointing the reality. Who can tell how many pathetic hopes and chimerical projects the pilgrims buried in the deserts of Syria before they reached the threshold of the land of their fathers? And even there, new mortifications were in store for them.<sup>2</sup> During the Captivity, the ancient enemies of Judah had established themselves where they pleased : the Edomites in the south as far as Hebron ; the Ammonites, the Philistines and the Samaritans had overrun everything, mingling with the Israelite families left behind on the conquered land. Out of all these mixed marriages had sprung a semi-heathen population, which the caravan of the believers met at every step, and with which it would have nothing to do. Friction soon became inevitable, the more so because the natives, being at home, considered they had a right to lend a hand to the new arrivals and to make common cause with them.

<sup>1</sup> *Ps.* cxxvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Haggai*, and *Zechariah* i.-viii.

The Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* originally formed one book with *Chronicles*. The portions of their books written in the first person are fragments of their memoirs.

The rebuff they met with was the prelude to endless miseries for the restored exiles. There was danger within no less than without. It was very soon plain that a certain number of Chaldeans and false brethren, urged on by a taste for adventure and the hope of benefiting by the brilliant promises of the Prophets,<sup>1</sup> had stolen into the ranks of the returning pilgrims. These "could not show their fathers' houses, and their seed, whether they were of Israel."<sup>2</sup> Others gave themselves out to be members of the priestly race, but could not produce their genealogies.<sup>3</sup> It was necessary, therefore, from the very day of arrival, to proceed to exclusions and expulsions, which gave rise to much heart-burning in the settlement. Things being so, the forty-two thousand pilgrims<sup>4</sup> could not dream of scattering their forces and allowing each one to return to his own city. They found it imperative to resign their ancient lands and to cluster closely around Jerusalem, so as to offer some resistance to foreign encroachments and to present a solid front to the enemy. Nor was it even proposed to organize a small state. The satrap this side of Euphrates would never have allowed a prince of the house of David to turn the settlement into a kingdom. The high-priest soon took the reins, and theocracy, in its realized form, became a hierocracy. The elect of the dynasty of Aaron was the chief of the priestly nobility, and the name of Levite, formerly a glorious title, was now only applied to the servants of the priest-king. During the first years, the restored exiles were busy settling themselves, in the midst of unfavourable surroundings and sunk in a deep despondency. The facts did not answer to their expectations. They had returned to the land of promise, had left all and dared all, but where was the reward of their untold effort? The yoke of Persia was growing more hateful than that of Babylon. Ill-natured neighbours harassed the new settlement. Idolatry was still insolent and treacherous. Jehovah had not ceased from His anger, and there was no sign of the reign of the Messiah.

What was still needed to regain the favour of Jehovah? The Temple, around which Ezekiel had concentrated the

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Is.* lvi. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezra* ii. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezra* ii. 62,

<sup>4</sup> *Ezra* ii. 64.

new Jerusalem : the Temple, in view of which the whole priestly legislation had been framed at the close of the Captivity. Towards 520 B.C., the flagging courage of the nation rose again for a time at the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, the son of Iddo.<sup>1</sup> The foundations of the Temple, long since deserted, were sought out and the new building was completed in 516 B.C. It was a poor house, whose humble dimensions were a painful contrast to Ezekiel's sumptuous descriptions. The presence of a sanctuary, which was essential to a theocracy, did not affect the precarious position of the Jews. Their haughty exclusiveness was unbearable to their neighbours and left them in a needy isolation. And so, when to their own private cares were added the disasters occasioned by the intestine quarrels by which the mighty empire was being torn, their courage failed them altogether. What was the use of separating themselves from other men and submitting to a thousand privations, if the only result was disappointment and if God refused to take them back into favour? The priests, attaching more weight to the political dignity of their office than to the religious duties it involved, set a fatal example,<sup>2</sup> and decadence began. It was all over with the chosen people, when the arrival of aid from outside put a new heart into the demoralized nation. In 458 B.C. a fresh caravan of Babylonian Jews set out, under the leadership of Ezra, to join the settlement at Jerusalem.

The Jews of Babylon possessed a great advantage over those of Judah. The fact that they were surrounded by real pagans, and not by semi-Israelites, had preserved them more effectually from regrettable contamination. In the land of exile, the enthusiasm which had inspired the departure of the forty-two thousand had remained pure. The religious and patriotic leaven had continued to operate. Literature, of which the sixth century had set the example,<sup>3</sup> and which

<sup>1</sup> *Ezra* v. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezra* x. 18.

<sup>3</sup> The Babylonian period produced the *Book of Ezekiel*, the Priestly Code, and the historical work in which the Deuteronomic editor combined the Prophetic tradition and *Deuteronomy*. The *Book of Lamentations*, numerous *Psalms*, and the speech of Elihu in the *Book of Job*, also belong to this epoch. The "Second"

had continued to flourish during the Persian period, received its crown at the hands of Ezra, scribe and priest, "ready in the law of Moses."<sup>1</sup> The men who returned in 525 B.C.—a noble band of Crusaders containing few priests and composed of patriots rather than saints—had bequeathed to their brethren two books, each of which contained part of the *Torah*. One was *Deuteronomy*, to which a historian had joined the Prophetic writings; and the other was the Priestly Code, drawn up at Babylon under the influence of Ezekiel's scheme of restoration. These two "Codes," representing respectively the charters of the past and of the future, had no reason to exist separately, since they both deal with the same epoch, both laid claim to the same origin and were both honoured as the teaching of Moses. On the contrary, the interests of Israel required that these two gems of the national literature should be joined together in a single sacred volume, which should be the treasure-house of all God's decrees and the foundation of the religion of the restored nation. Ezra (in 458 B.C.) undertook the task,<sup>2</sup> assisted by faithful scribes, while the priests and Levites, stung to the quick by his exhortations<sup>3</sup> and ashamed of their long resistance, zealously prepared for a second exodus. The new Judaism thus received its complete consecration and the law of Israel its final shape. The caravan of heroes, whose fearless enterprise threatened to fail, was followed by another caravan of devotees which settled the future of the Jewish religion. Ezra, the patriot-reformer, led his band of exiles home with the law of Jehovah in his hand. He was descended from Zadok, was surrounded by members of the clergy trained in his own school, and was the bearer of a unique code, whose well-ordered parts lent each other mutual support and which contained the complete cycle of the Mosaic revelation; and he burned to carry out among the remnant who had returned from exile the same work that he had performed among the captives in

*Isaiah* (in Palestine) probably, and Ezra's edition of the Pentateuch certainly, belong to the Persian period.

<sup>1</sup> *Ezra* vii. 6. Cf. *Ezra* vii. 10, vii. 21, vii. 14, vii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix VII. Ezra.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezra* viii.

Babylon, which was "to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."<sup>1</sup>

Immediately on his arrival, the chiefs of his countrymen informed him of the disorders then rife in the new settlement, and implored his aid. Ezra rent his garment, wept bitter tears and set bravely to work. The first necessity was to rid the community of the curse weighing upon it owing to illicit marriages. At first, in agreement with Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel, of the great house of Elam,<sup>2</sup> Ezra wished the whole nation to form an association, all the members of which should bind themselves to put away their foreign wives. The failure of this first attempt forced him to appoint a kind of committee of public safety, composed of prominent men, whose duty it was to see that all necessary steps were taken to turn away the fierce wrath of God.<sup>3</sup> It would seem that the energy of this committee succeeded for a time in purifying the clergy and the people of any heathen connexion. But, beside that purely negative reform, how many others were necessary to secure the observance of the Sabbath, the service of the Temple and the proper working of the theocracy! The task was gigantic and difficult. Ezra, to reach his goal, required the vigorous support of the civil authority. Such support was providentially supplied him in 445 B.C. by the arrival of Nehemiah, the king's cup-bearer and favourite.<sup>4</sup> In the month Chisleu of the year 445 B.C. Nehemiah heard from Hanani, who had come from Judah, that the remnant of the Captivity there in the province were "in great affliction and reproach," and the walls of Jerusalem broken down.<sup>5</sup> He obtained leave from Artaxerxes to put himself at the head of his countrymen,

<sup>1</sup> *Ezra* vii. 10. We do not say that in Nehemiah's time the text of the Pentateuch was finally fixed. *Chronicles* and the Talmud prove that the development of the law and enriching of tradition went on after the death of Ezra. From book to book, and from commentary to commentary, there came a gradual decline into the apocryphal and a slipping away from the path of Revelation. Jewish tradition eventually made void the word of God (*Mark* vii. 13) in the same way that the Roman tradition, some centuries later, supplanted the Gospel. Judaism little by little, by a slow evolution, strayed away from Revelation, and eventually took up a position sharply opposed to its spirit.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezra* x. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ezra* x. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Neh.* ii. 1-7.

<sup>5</sup> *Neh.* i. 3.

and set out, promising to return as soon as he had rebuilt the walls of Zion.<sup>1</sup>

This time the pilgrim was armed with proper letters and accompanied by an escort of the king's horsemen.<sup>2</sup> His advent revived the zeal of the Jews, who saw in it a sign of God's favour, and satisfied the longing of Ezra, who was at last able to unfold the law of Moses and demand its execution. A better day was dawning for Jerusalem. The city and its religion were alike going to emerge from the depths of their abasement. Nehemiah was for the helpless Jews of his day what Antoine Court was later for the Huguenots. His fearlessness was not to be balked either by the traps of Tobiah and Sanballat, or by the threats of false prophets. His only help was in Jehovah.<sup>3</sup> Thus by his conduct he showed the 'oscillating and despondent remnant of his countrymen how the help of God may rescue from the most desperate situations. Engrossed in the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, the Jews understood that, in the political storm in which the nation was tossed, they had but one protector, Jehovah; and that Jehovah alone kept them alive by keeping them together, by giving them a religion superior to all others, and by promising them, as a reward of their loyalty, restoration and future greatness. The national and the religious consciousness awoke together. The remnant of the nation were filled with enthusiasm and claimed as a privilege what reformers had vainly endeavoured to make them consent to; and on the first day of the seventh month<sup>4</sup> "the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate" and asked Ezra for "the book of the law." A pulpit was immediately erected, and Ezra, supported by Nehemiah, the governor, the priests and the Levites, "opened the book in the sight of the people"<sup>5</sup> and blessed Jehovah, while the crowd "answered

<sup>1</sup> *Neh.* ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Neh.* ii. 7-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Neh.* ii. 11-20, iv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Neh.* viii. 1. We are not told the year. Nehemiah arrived in 445 B.C. The reformation took place therefore at earliest in 444, perhaps even a year or two later.

<sup>5</sup> *Neh.* viii. 1, and foll.

Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands." The reading began, and the people listened attentively and earnestly to the Levites' explanations. Soon all hearts were touched and men wept as they heard the words of the Law. Then Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites said to the people: "This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. . . . Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength." On hearing these words, the people dispersed to close in mirth the great day of Jehovah. The reading was continued for eight days. The whole assembly of those who had returned from exile wished to have knowledge of it. The feast of Tabernacles was celebrated on so magnificent a scale that the children of Israel had seen nothing like it since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun. Then, after a solemn feast and the confession of the nation's sins,<sup>1</sup> the Jewish community made a formal covenant with Jehovah, with a written deed sealed at the end of the month by the governor, the priests, the Levites and the chiefs of the people.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the solemn foundation on which the edifice of Judaism arose. From that point began the opposition between the *kahal* or community properly so called and the *am-haarets* or ignorant and profane mob.<sup>3</sup> Up till then, reforms, like those of Hezekiah or Josiah, had been originated by the kings, and the governing classes, and had been effected by force, and consequently had been short-lived. This time, the covenant was the result of a great popular movement. The reform, proceeding from the soul of the nation, lasted as long as the nation itself. But, while winning a decisive political victory, the ancient worship of Israel suffered a religious defeat, the final consequence of which had to be borne, four centuries later, by the Messiah on the Cross. The final covenant, concluded with Jehovah by means of the complete Pentateuch,<sup>4</sup> was realized according

<sup>1</sup> *Neh.* ix.

<sup>2</sup> See *Neh.* ix. and x.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *John* vii. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Several allusions to *Deuteronomy*, e.g. prohibition of marriage with the daughters of the land (*Deut.* vii. 2), the command to cancel debts in the

to the spirit and the letter of the Priestly Code.<sup>1</sup> Now, as we have seen, the Priestly Code was far from satisfying the religious ideal of Prophecy. Excellent as it might be for founding a national religion, it was not equal to the task of creating and keeping alive in men's souls individual piety, the thirst for forgiveness and conversion, and that personal communion with God, which lies at the root of revealed religion. With its ceremonies and its casuistry, its confusion of the temporal with the spiritual, of the nation with the Church, its blind obedience to the priests and its tendency to regard as righteous any one who satisfied the demands of the ritual, it ran a risk of leading the religious sense astray and materializing it, of making the mere form pass for the substance, and of allowing the growth, under the shadow of the altar, of those two great foes of Revelation, pride and fanaticism. Malachi and Joel, the last of the Prophets, who were Nehemiah's contemporaries, show us how much at that time the religious idea had already lost of its moral depth and spirituality. True, the pious accents of the ancient *nebhiim* of Israel are still occasionally heard, and we must not deny the fact. But conversion to Jehovah, which was the sole object of ancient Prophecy, seems already to be falling into the background. Ancient Prophecy had said: "Enough of your feasts and your burnt offerings! The only sacrifice in which Jehovah delights is that of a broken heart." But Malachi, intent on the priestly rites, the strict observance of which secures the favour of Jehovah, exclaims:

But cursed be the deceiver,  
Which hath in his flock a male,  
And voweth and sacrificeth unto Jehovah  
A blemished thing. . . .

Sabbatical year (*Deut.* xv. 2), the exclusion of Ammonites and Moabites from the assembly (*Deut.* xxiii.), and the use of clearly Deuteronomic phraseology, all these show beyond a doubt that the *Torah* of Ezra contained the complete Pentateuch.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the offering of the first-born and firstfruits to God, and payment of tithes to the Levites (*Neh.* x. 36-40. Cf. *Num.* xv. 20, xviii. 11-32; *Levit.* xxvii. 30, etc.); the stoppage of trade on the Sabbath and feast-days (*Neh.* x. 31); the  $\frac{1}{3}$  shekel for the Temple service (*Exod.* xxx. 13; *Neh.* x. 32-33); the feast of Tabernacles lasting eight days (*Neh.* viii. 13-18; *Levit.* xxiii. 33-43).



Present it now unto thy governor ;  
Will he be pleased with thee ?<sup>1</sup>

He also censures the priests, because he finds them not sufficiently well versed in the knowledge of the Law, or scrupulous in the performance of ceremonies or strict in the interpretation of ordinances :

For the priest's lips should keep knowledge  
And they should seek the law at his mouth :  
For he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts.<sup>2</sup>

These passages are more enlightening than any amount of abstract reasoning, on the subject of the deep change, both in religious notions and in the organization of the worship, which was wrought by the practical application of the Priestly Code. Jewish exclusiveness supplanted Messianic universalism.<sup>3</sup> Levitical purity took the place of both morality and religion.<sup>4</sup> There was now no talk of Prophets. Jehovah's representative was the priest. The faithful were to be known from the unfaithful by the character of their offering. Side by side with admirable sentiment and the purest rapture of Prophetic inspiration, there are other passages which clearly betray the Levitical spirit :

Will a man rob God ? Yet ye rob me.  
But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee ?  
In tithes and offerings.  
Ye are cursed with the curse ;  
For ye rob me, even this whole nation.  
Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse,  
That there may be meat in mine house,  
And prove me now herewith,  
Saith Jehovah of hosts,  
If I will not open you the windows of heaven,  
And pour you out a blessing,  
That there shall not be room enough to receive it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mal.* i. 14 and 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Mal.* ii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Mal.* i. 11 refers to Jews scattered in foreign lands. Cf. iv. 7-12.

<sup>4</sup> The evil from which the Levite turns the people away, is Levitical impurity and the wrong interpretation of the Law (ii. 7-9, iii. 7-12).

<sup>5</sup> *Mal.* iii. 8-10.

"The golden key opens every door," says popular common-sense. Fill the treasury of the Temple, and you shall see the windows of heaven opening! That was the advice the Popes gave in the middle ages. It was also the preaching of Tetzel, and, before him, of the Pharisees, those great payers of tithes. Now the preaching of the Pharisees was itself only the far-off distorted echo of that of *Levitism*, that new form of the *Elohistic* conception of religion which holds that offences are to be redeemed by meritorious acts and by fines, and which proportions God's favours to the believer's submission to the rites laid upon him by the priest.

Can we then be surprised if the history of Judaism shows under the Old Covenant an evolution precisely similar to that of Roman Catholicism under the New? The court of Rome, resolved to crush the Reformation at all costs, showed no lack of political sagacity, and the majority of persecutors were sincere. The Jewish nation, in crucifying the Messiah foretold by the Prophets, committed a monstrous, but not an illogical, act. The crime was the unavoidable result of the guidance of its priests. The day that *Levitism* was organized, decadence began. Creative power and spiritual life gradually dwindled away. The scribe took the place of the Prophet. Religious life, which found expression in the last of the Psalms, cut itself off more and more from the official worship, to re-appear in a more earnest and purer form in the individual; and thus was developed the contrast which burst upon the world, in the days of Jesus, between the song of Simeon and the prayer of the Pharisee.

## CHAPTER III.

### TRIUMPH OF PRIEST OVER PROPHET (OF *ELOHISM* OVER *JEHOVISM*). FINAL DOWNFALL OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE.

ESTHER I.-X.<sup>1</sup> JONAH I.-IV. THE REVOLT OF THE MACCABEES<sup>2</sup>—I MACC. II. THE PERSECUTIONS UNDER ANTIOCHUS AND THE APOCALYPSE OF DANIEL<sup>3</sup>—DANIEL I.-XII. JEWISH PHILOSOPHY—ECCLESIASTES I.-XII.<sup>4</sup> THE RELIGION OF THE PHARISEES—TALMUD, AND LUKE XVIII. 9-14. THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH—MARK I. THE MESSIAH'S TEACHING—GOSPELS, *passim*. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MESSIAH AND THE RELIGION OF THE PHARISEES—GOSPELS, *passim*. THE MESSIAH IS REJECTED AND FORETELLS THE RUIN OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE—GOSPELS *passim*. THE MESSIAH CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED—GOSPELS. THE FALL OF JERUSALEM AND FINAL DISPERSION OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE—JOSEPHUS, JEWISH WAR, BK. VII.

*Section 1. The Jews during the Last Century of the Persian Supremacy—The Samaritan Schism and the Galilean Missions—The Rule of the Priests and Priestly Literature—The Book of Jonah and Jehovahism.*

THE century extending from Nehemiah to Alexander the Great was for Israel a period of comparative peace. The empire of Darius and Xerxes had exhausted its resources. Its rulers, conquered more by domestic dissensions than by

<sup>1</sup> Judaism was distinguished more and more by racial pride, dreams of political ambition and thirst for revenge, such as we find in the *Book of Esther*, in which the name of God is not so much as mentioned. Meanwhile a descendant of the Prophets strove to recall his fellow-countrymen to a sense of Israel's mission in

the fortune by war, looked impotently on at the decay of their kingdom ; and huge armies still went to and fro close to the frontiers of Judaea, in a supreme effort to check invasion, especially from Egypt, which was a never-ending source of uneasiness. But the growing feebleness of the suzerain power confirmed day by day the independence of the vassal provinces. And thus it was that the Jews in the fourth century were able to follow out the religious evolution which was imperceptibly transforming the nation of the Prophets into a church of Rabbis. Were this page of history better known, we might perhaps have laid stress on the influence of the providential meeting of two religions admirably calculated for mutual understanding, and we might trace

the world. His book bears the name of *Jonah*, because its teaching takes the form of an episode attributed to the life of the Prophet of Jeroboam II.'s time. Its aim is to remind Jews that God is love, and that His purpose towards all nations is one of love and salvation. Jealousy, pride and hate do not fulfil Jehovah's will. The death and resurrection of Jonah presents in a striking parable the great truth that Israel cannot perform the part assigned to it by Providence unless it die to its personal existence and national selfishness.

<sup>2</sup>The Apocrypha, or "hidden" books, were those which were not admitted into the Hebrew canon. They were made known through the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament. Luther regarded the *First Book of Maccabees* as well worthy of a place in the canon. It tells how the Jews, under Antiochus, saved their religion by their courage.

<sup>3</sup>The *Book of Daniel* was written in the dark days when the tyrant Antiochus was striving to annihilate the Jews and their religion. It is the first example in the sacred writings of the Apocalyptic type of composition. Apocalypses are works in which visions, enigmatical revelations, and heroic tales drawn from popular legend and adapted to the requirements of the time, are employed to revive the courage and the hopes of the oppressed. In order to sustain the faith of Antiochus' victims (176-167 B.C.), the *Book of Daniel* recounts edifying and consoling events of the days following on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. The facts related are now beyond the control of history. But they set forth admirably the theme of the whole work : the day of Jehovah's enemies is gone, all men are in His hand, successive empires have vainly trusted to brute force, the triumph of faith is certain and is drawing near, the hour is coming when the Most High will extend His rule over the whole world.

<sup>4</sup>*Ecclesiastes* breathes none of the ardent piety or enthusiastic optimism of the Prophets. The author speaks of the wretchedness of the world and vanity or human labour in a tone of disillusioned melancholy. He has not lost his faith, but his faith is without virtue or ideal. No book demonstrates more thoroughly the insufficiency of the religion in which the priest has supplanted the Prophet.

to the penetration of Hebrew religion by Persian theology a good number of doctrines with which Judaism enriched the rudimentary dogmas of Israel. Such are the doctrines of heaven and hell, of angels and of Satan, of the personal immortality of the righteous, and of the Last Judgement ; in a word, the value of the human soul and the meaning of the battle of Life. All these notions have passed from Judaism into the Gospel, and their appearance in Judaism is more easily explained by the influence of Aryan and Persian thought than by a simple development of Hebrew theology. Nothing is left to chance in the history of the preparation of salvation. Chaldaea, Persia, Greece and Rome, each in its turn at the appointed time, help on the divine plan and lend God's people the fruitful stimulus it needs. But it would be rash to dogmatize. The only thing of which we can speak with certainty in the fourth century, is the activity the Jews displayed in following out Ezra's priestly organization and establishing it on a firm basis. The Temple had been rebuilt, and had secured the supremacy of the priesthood. The "*Jehovist*" party, thrown out of their reckoning by the new conceptions of Ezekiel, possessed neither the power nor the skill to oppose the growing influence of the scribes, who since the days of the Exile had displayed extraordinary energy as legislators and compilers of history. The voice of the Prophets was still. The object of Ezra's restoration was the organization of the Jewish community in obedience to the principles of the Priestly Code, and now it was the turn of Ezra's successors to speak.

The Priestly Code may be reduced to one great idea and one great institution, which from this time forward entered into the daily life of the Jews and helped to mould their mental attitude. The great idea, already foreshadowed by Ezekiel when he said that the national restoration of Israel was required by the honour of God, was that the Jewish nation, as a nation, was the first-born son of Jehovah. It was not by election but by right of primogeniture that it occupied the first place among the nations of the world. The glorious promises belonged to it by right, not by grace. They belonged to it by birth, as an inalienable inheritance.

The Priestly Code in its historical portions, brought all this out very clearly, by means of unbroken genealogies, in which it was proved beyond a doubt that Adam in reality was the first Jew.<sup>1</sup> The rest of the world was to the Jewish nation what Ishmael was to Isaac or Esau to Jacob. Other nations seemed to exist merely to give Jehovah an opening for showing His preference for His lawful heir, and Israel an opportunity of exercising supremacy over all the kingdoms of the earth. The dream of the Priestly Code will be fulfilled only when all the nations are reduced to picking up the crumbs that fall from Abraham's table, and "ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."<sup>2</sup> The great institution, prepared in secret by the priesthood of the first Temple and actually introduced by Ezekiel's laws, was the establishment of the hierocracy. In the days of Israel and Judah, the kings had their high priests, as they had their scribes, their treasurers and their captains. The high priest served, according to his master's wishes, either Jehovah or some Syrian Baal. But after the Captivity Ezekiel would not have it so any longer. Israel was to emerge from the ordeal purified. The Law of Jehovah, that charter of the Jewish nation's privileges, should at last be respected. No more idolatry, no more plurality of sanctuaries, but too often faithless. In the one and only sanctuary, established by God, the king himself should be the high priest responsible for the execution of the Law. This vision of Priest-King was magnificent, but it reckoned without the ambition of the clergy, whose growing popularity did not in the least dispose them to withdraw in favour of a prince of the line of David. Besides, such a prince was not made necessary by circumstances. The triumphant priesthood retained nothing of Ezekiel's project but the very convenient doctrine which united the temporal and the spiritual power in the same hands. Only the Priestly Code reversed the terms: for the Priest-King proposed by Ezekiel, it substituted the King-Priest. The priests' system of government was cleverly

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix VI. The Priestly Code.

<sup>2</sup> *Zech.* viii. 23.

organized, and exploited skilfully on the one hand Jewish patriotism which resented the presence of foreign satraps keeping the monopoly of the civil authority, and on the other hand the religious activity kept incessantly on the alert by the bickerings of Judah's neighbours. And so, by a perfectly natural process, the king-priest, or "high priest" of the centralized worship developed by unanimous consent into a kind of ethnarch, to whom all the people liked to look up, who embodied the national pride, and whose authority was daily increased by the princely revenues which the new legislation guaranteed the Temple and its priests.<sup>1</sup>

It goes without saying that this high priesthood was from the outset plunged into all the intrigues which habitually gather around such an office. It would even seem that the Persian government made use of them in order to try by favours to secure an accommodating priesthood. Thus Bagoses (or Bagoas), general and probably governor of Syria under Artaxerxes Mnemon (404-359 B.C.), had strained every nerve to obtain for Jesus, the grand-son of Eliashib, the office of high priest, then held by his brother Johanan.<sup>2</sup> The rivalry between the brothers reached such a pitch of bitterness that, in the course of a quarrel in the very Temple, Johanan flew at Jesus and killed him. The murder caused tremendous indignation. Bagoses, hearing of the sacrilegious murder, hurried to the scene, forced his way into the Holy Place, and, not daring to lay hands on the fratricide high priest, laid on the Jewish community a tribute of fifty drachmas on each of the lambs of the daily sacrifice. The fine, according to Josephus, was paid during seven years. If the history of the fourth century were better known, other facts like this would certainly show us how great a part human ambition and politics played in the establishment of the hereditary high priesthood among the Jews.

From the religious point of view, the success of priestly ambition possessed a far-reaching importance. The priests were the guardians of the theodicy of the Prophets, and the society they constituted presented to the heathen world the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix VI. The Priestly Code.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Neh.* xii. and Josephus, *Antiquities*, xi. 7.

spectacle of a religion proclaiming aloud and honouring the unity, supremacy, holiness and mercy of God. But the moral preaching of the heralds of the Spirit had disappeared from the priestly ritualism, whose practices became more and more external and might be expressed in three words: Law, sacrifices and Sabbath. For universal salvation and the doctrine of grace were substituted national exclusiveness and the doctrine of works. There was no Fall, and therefore no need of repentance. The Prophets had spoken of its duties to a people that had been ransomed: the priests spoke of their rights to the first-born of the nations. Therein lies the whole difference between the two theologies. Self-righteousness was everywhere and tainted the most zealous devotion. Jewish pride, let loose by the new doctrine, which represented the whole course of the world's history as leading up to the glorification of Jerusalem, soon gave birth to the fierce exclusiveness of the Rabbis, for whom really there was no human race and no salvation. There were Jews, they held, the only descendants of Adam, the first Jew: these alone were heirs of eternal life, thanks to the *Neshamah* or spiritual soul, transmitted to them alone by their father Adam.<sup>1</sup> As for other men, did they even deserve to be so called? No, man was the Jew; man's neighbour was also the Jew. As for the heathen, he was a pariah, an accursed thing, a beast,<sup>2</sup> "*the offscourings of the earth.*"<sup>3</sup> And when Jesus, to prove the Canaanite woman, said to her, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the *dogs*,"<sup>4</sup> He was using one of the mildest expressions of His time for the great mass of the Gentiles. There was a gulf fixed between the Jew and the Gentile, owing to the fact that the *Neshamah* had been withdrawn from the latter, so that he was reduced to the same level and the same destiny as the beasts. There was

<sup>1</sup> The Rabbis liked to picture Adam as the father of the Jews and the model of attentive keepers of the law. Cf. *Midrash Bereshith Rabbah*, xxiv. and xvii. Strange! Adam, instead of being he from Whom we inherit condemnation and death, is to the Rabbis the father who assures the Jews superiority over other men and transmits immortality to them!

<sup>2</sup> *Midrash Shemoth Rabbah* compares Egyptians to animals. Their flesh is that of the ass, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Midrash Vajikra*.

<sup>4</sup> *Matt.* xv. 26; *Mark* vii. 27.



no reason why the Gentile should rise again. He did not even belong to the class of rebels who, according to the Rabbis, would rise again for judgement and then be annihilated. He lived and died away from God.<sup>1</sup> As for the Jew, the mere fact of his being a Jew and in possession of the *Neshamah*, spared him all trouble but the minute observance of the ordinances and the offering of the Pharisee's prayer: "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men . . ."<sup>2</sup> "for my goal is eternal life, whereas they go no further than the pit of destruction."<sup>3</sup> There was no longer any thought of the Fall or of the need of salvation. Provided the Jew did not desert the army of the faithful observers of the Law, he would inherit heaven by right of birth. Every generous, broad-minded, truly religious idea worthy of the humility of a sinner before God had vanished, to make room for the self-righteousness of a narrow exclusivism. The Jew had no need of salvation, the Gentile was unworthy of it: that was the last word of Rabbinical theology. We need no more to appreciate the bitter irony of Christ towards the Pharisees,<sup>4</sup> and the emphasis with which St. Paul proved to the Jews that they were no better than the Gentiles in the eyes of divine justice and that "God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all."<sup>5</sup> The reason why we lay so much stress on the religious bearing of this new direction given to Israelite theology, is to make it quite clear why we call the history of the Jewish religion after the captivity a return to *Elohism* and a triumph of Levitical *Elohism* over the *Jehovism* of the Prophets. With the advent of the Priestly Code, the characteristic features of the moral *Jehovism* vanished, and Jehovah, whatever the formal purity of His worship, turned again to Elohim—that is to say, an exclusive God, the protector of one particular

<sup>1</sup> *Midrash Vajikrah Rabbah*, 13 (on *Levit.* xi. 4). "Heathen nations are not destined to eternal life."

<sup>2</sup> *Luke* xviii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Treatise Berachoth*, fol. 28. A Pharisee's prayer.

<sup>4</sup> They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick (*Matt.* ix. 12; *Mark* ii. 17; *Luke* v. 31).

<sup>5</sup> *Rom.* xi. 32, and *Galatians* and *Romans*, *passim*.

people, intent only upon its national glory, and expecting from it not the inward transformation of the heart, but gifts, rites and pious works. So true was this that when John the Baptist and Jesus came to restore *Jehovism* to its place of honour, the official clergy of Jehovah accused them of being possessed with devils.

Politically, the priestly organization of the fourth century was not completed without arousing opposition, rivalries, and schisms, of which history, though so niggardly of information on that epoch, has yet preserved some faint echoes. The gravest event was undoubtedly the exodus of the discontented priests, who, following Manasseh the brother of the high priest Jaddus, founded on Mount Gerizim a rival temple to that on Mount Zion. Manasseh, the priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat, the governor of Samaria.<sup>1</sup> The party which advocated reform and would accept no compromise touching mixed marriages, called upon Manasseh to choose between his wife and his priesthood. Manasseh was going to repudiate Nicosis, when his father-in-law gave him to understand that if he and all the priests who found the uncompromising attitude of the orthodox party intolerable would come to Samaria, Artaxerxes would certainly authorize the erection on Mount Gerizim of a temple like that at Jerusalem. Thus Manasseh would be able both to keep his wife and to become high priest, exactly like his brother Jaddus. The offer was irresistible. Sanballat obtained from his sovereign permission to erect the coveted altar. Round that altar there flocked the recalcitrant priests and laymen who would not submit to the imperious measures of Nehemiah, and thus it was that a little love and much ambition laid the foundation of the Samaritan Church.<sup>2</sup> This schism was only apparently a source of weakness, for in reality it allowed the party of reform to

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, xi. 7. The fact is told, but wrongly ascribed to the age of Darius and Alexander the Great.

<sup>2</sup> *Neh.* xiii. 18. The Samaritans accordingly always regarded themselves as the legitimate sons of Israel. Later, to uphold that character, they adopted the Pentateuch, which alone, in the eyes of heathen and Jews alike, could give their religion an authentic foundation. The hostility between Jews and Samaritans survived the destruction of the Temple of Gerizim by John Hyrcanus (120 B.C.), and re-appears as lively as ever in the New Testament.

fortify its organization around the new legislation and to mould Judaism to their liking. The Jews, however, took alarm, and it is to their alarm that we must attribute the missionary zeal displayed at this period (and not in the time of Hezekiah, as the *Book of Chronicles* would have it) by the Doctors of the Law, who scoured every corner of Israelite territory, preaching adherence to the Law and loyalty to the Temple of Jerusalem. These missions, which resulted in the adhesion of Galilee to the Jewish community, also led to the erection of synagogues or local sanctuaries, where the Law was explained every Sabbath, and which thus advantageously took the place of the ancient *bamoth* of Israel as centres of religious activity. The synagogues not only performed the function of keeping up among the dispersed Jews the spiritual life and the consciousness of Jehovah's call. They kept up also the right understanding of the sacred books, the language of which, since the restoration, had gradually made way for the official dialect of the whole province, Syriac or Aramaic. From the fourth century onwards, Hebrew began to be only a sacred language,<sup>1</sup> of which the priests alone held the key and which played among the Jews the part played by Latin in the Catholic Church. It is well known what capital the clergy may make out of such a dangerous prerogative. Ignorance is everywhere the mother of superstition. At the point where the believer ceases to understand God's language, the priest perforce becomes an interpreter and go-between. The people go to the priest and only through him to God. The consequent enslavement of the conscience is the poisoned fruit of all forms of clericalism.

The dispersion of the Jewish community was another favourable circumstance of which the clergy took advantage to establish their supremacy. In Nehemiah's day, as formerly under the kings, the chiefs of the people used to meet together to direct public affairs, and those patriarchal assemblies, in which the lay element preponderated, constituted the parliament of the country. When Nehemiah was gone, the absence of a national chief was cruelly felt. The dispersion

<sup>1</sup> The *Septuagint* proves that among the Jews of the Dispersion Greek had taken the place of their mother-tongue.

of the community also put obstacles in the way of those plenary assemblies, which must besides have caused some uneasiness to the Persian government, for gatherings of the sort might at any time become centres of conspiracy. And so it was that, religion overshadowing all other interests and being the only field in which the suzerain allowed Israel complete independence, the spiritual chiefs of the chosen people succeeded without much trouble in getting the upper hand in the affairs of the country. They were richly endowed, made brilliant marriages and found the aristocracy ready to accommodate them. The old democratic assembly was replaced by the *Gerousia*, an oligarchical senate presided over by the high priest, whose office had become hereditary. And from this *Gerousia* there sprang, at the close of the fourth century, the *Sanhedrin*, a central government entirely controlled by the influence of the clergy, comprising under the rule of the high priest the college of doctors of the Law, scribes and elders, and in the days of Jesus still representing the highest religious and civil authority among the Jews.

The activity of the priesthood did not show itself only in politics and religion. Its literary measures, directly after Nehemiah's reformation, were of the highest importance. The Deuteronomic reforms had already produced an historical work, in which, from the early narratives of the *Jehovist* to the annals of the *Books of Kings*, the important periods of the life of Israel had been chronicled with the aid of a compilation of documents drawn up in the Prophetic spirit. The century which established the victory of priest over Prophet produced on its part also a literature of a corresponding spirit, and to it we owe the earliest canon of the Jewish Bible, the "Law of Moses," that is to say, the Pentateuch in its final form.<sup>1</sup> That is why the ancient sources of the *Jehovist* religion, in the present Pentateuch, are found buried beneath the priestly legislation and distributed so as to fit into the

<sup>1</sup> The legislative work of priests and scribes began with compilations of the Priestly Code. It was continued in the *mishnah* (instruction) and *gemara* (completion), a voluminous collection of Jewish traditions and Rabbinical commentaries together constituting the Talmud.

historical framework of the Priestly Code. The clerical scribes also wrote a priestly edition of the history of the Kings, which has come down to us under the name of *Chronicles*. To the history of the Kings they added the acts of the reformers and the Jewish restoration, in the books which bear the names of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. To connect the old times with the new, the compilers made numerous additions to the books of *Joshua*, *Judges* and *Ruth*. They also touched up some passages in *Samuel*. Genealogies and numberings abound in their work, showing clearly to anyone who is willing to examine them the consistently apologetic purpose of this national literature of the fourth century, this admirable monument raised by Jewish piety<sup>1</sup> to the glory of the hierocracy.

In the midst of all this labour, in which Levitical *Elohism* had free play and from which the Judaism of the Pharisees sprang into being, one voice, however, was raised in favour of the forgotten *Jehovism*. It suffices to assure us that, though Ezekiel triumphed over the “Second Isaiah,” yet the spiritual doctrine of the “Second Isaiah” was not lost, but was continuing, unperceived, to win disciples. The book in which it is heard is one of the shortest of the Old Testament, one of those most talked about and least understood, and whose real importance has never been appreciated. It bears the title *Jonah*. We are also inclined to attribute to the epoch and surroundings which produced the *Book of Jonah*, the idyl of *Ruth*, in its final form. We have already said above why we consider the original story to be very ancient. But the Aramaisms of the style, the language used about the levirate law, the undoubted appearance of being a later addition which attaches to the chronology, and finally, the fact that this little book was only inserted in the latest portion of the Hebrew canon, the “Kethubim,” compel us to place the actual edition of *Ruth* not earlier than the fourth century. The

<sup>1</sup> While the *Jehovistic* tradition of the history of Israel (Deuteronomic version) condemned Israel's past as a prolonged unfaithfulness, the new priestly edition idealized the past and spoke of it as if the Law had been generally observed. This notion was inherited by the Church and warped its understanding of the rôle of the Prophets.

lesson inculcated by this graceful story is, as in the case of the *Book of Jonah*, a lesson of mercy.<sup>1</sup> In opposition to the rigorous exclusiveness which was becoming more and more the distinctive mark of Judaism, it adduces without comment a fact well calculated to prove that God is more large-hearted than the restorers of His people, for does it not tell how He chose His representative David from a family which had not repudiated the Moabites? To return to *Jonah*. This little poem was written towards the close of the fourth century, in the midst of the Jewish community in which the national pride and religious exclusiveness of the *Book of Esther*, which were to produce the party of the Pharisees, were already rife; and its purpose was to combat the prejudices and egoism of Israel. Jonah, whose name recalls a Prophet who lived under Jeroboam II., before Amos (2 *Kings* xiv. 25), is here a personification of his nation, proud of its redemption but jealous for its privileges and angry at the thought that Jehovah wished to extend His grace and His love to other nations than the Jews. There are the greatest difficulties in the way of accepting this as an historical episode. The style is full of Aramaisms, and reminiscences of very late works are to be found in the song; and the allusions to Nineveh imply that that city no longer exists. The conversion of the Ninevites, the central feature of the story, is decidedly improbable, and besides is entirely ignored by the Prophets of the eighth century, who would not have failed to claim credit for it, and who, on the contrary, depict the Assyrian capital as the centre of Oriental Paganism. All difficulties vanish if we allow that the author of the little poem, no doubt amplifying some episode in the life of the Prophet of Gath-Epher, made use of the remembrance he had left behind him, to illustrate a doctrine the sublime perfection of which we find in Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan: God is the father of all His creatures; He loves them all with an equal love; He has for them all the same goodwill and forethought; and that man shows himself truly the child of God

<sup>1</sup>Add to this also some Psalms (in Books iii. iv. and v. of the *Psalms*). Generally speaking, the Psalms reveal the surest grasp of the *Jehovist* religion. Hence their universal value.

and the elect of His kingdom, who loves others and shows them mercy and works for their salvation.

A doctrine like this, in which the *Jehovism* of the great Prophets re-appears in a more perfect form, showed incomparable boldness in the midst of surroundings in which Levitical *Elohism* was proceeding to mould a nation zealous for its national God and its legal religion, but quite incapable of repentance for its sins or of love for other nations than itself. Let us therefore, instead of letting our attention be distracted by the miraculous details of the parable, the whale, or the gourd, go straight to the essentials; let us take to heart the lesson in which the prophecy made and then withdrawn<sup>1</sup> displays in a stirring manner the love of the Heavenly Father; let us admire the providential intervention of God, and, in a word, the miracle by which at the same time that the restored Israelites were sinking into doctrines which were to produce the murderers of the Messiah, Jehovah raised up a messenger to check His people in the path of pharisaic exclusiveness and bring to its ears, in the name of His everlasting mercy, a final warning. The people did not listen to the divine message, and God, Who puts compulsion upon no man, let the new *Elohism* develop its own consequences and pave the way for the martyrdom of Golgotha. The *Book of Jonah*, which is transitional between the prophecies of the “Second Isaiah” and the preaching of Jesus, marks one more of the bright stages by which those heroes of *Jehovism*, whose words for ever fell on deaf ears, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah and the “Second Isaiah,” strove, but in vain, to lead the chosen people to its glorious destiny.

*Section 2. The Jews under the Greeks—Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies (332-198 B.C.)—Judaism and Hellenism in the third century—The Expansion of Judaism and the universal Bible.*

Towards the close of the fourth century an event occurred which changed the course of history. The triumphant

<sup>1</sup>The decree was pronounced. Nineveh repented. Jehovah withdrew his decree (*Jonah* iii. 10).

irruption of Europe into Asia, following on the victories of Alexander the Great, shook the whole East and shifted the centre of gravity of the civilized world. A new influence, that of the Greeks, assumed the lead in the world of ideas. This movement brought on the religion of Jehovah trials and transformations in which its religious originality and historical mission were all but shipwrecked. After conquering the last king of Persia, Darius Codomannus, near Issus, in 333 B.C., Alexander, marching against Egypt, took Tyre and Gaza as he passed, and advanced against Jerusalem. Then it was that, according to Josephus, the high priest Jaddus, with his mitre on his head and an escort of priests around him, went to meet the conqueror. So deep was the impression they produced on the youthful conqueror's mind that he consented to join them in a solemn entry into Jerusalem and offering of sacrifices to the God of Israel. Before continuing his victorious progress, he granted the Jews numerous privileges, among them being freedom to live according to their "Torah." Of this story, in which a braggart Jewish nationalism allows itself a few exaggerations, we may at any rate accept this as a fact, that the Macedonian's keen eye immediately detected what there was in the little nation and what capital he could make out of it. Alexander had left Andromachus behind as governor of Syria, and Samaria had been mad enough to burn him alive. That act, which was followed by terrible reprisals, must have still further drawn attention to the conduct of the Jews, and we cannot be surprised at the tradition that, after the foundation of Alexandria, the organizers of the new empire offered the Jews there the same privileges as the Greeks. Alexander the Great had conceived the grand project of basing the unity of his empire, not on force of arms, but on community of language, civilization and manners. To attain this object, the Jewish temperament seemed to him as favourable as the Greek. And so both he and the generals who quarrelled over his spoils encouraged the formation of Jewish colonies as agents of moral growth and political unification. They even went the length of appointing them by preference to positions of trust and using violence to force their establishment in Greek cities



of recent foundation. Thus arose, in the third century, by the conqueror's favour, the famous Jewish *Diaspora*,<sup>1</sup> whose intellectual, moral and even commercial influence was so great during the centuries preceding and leading up to the advent of Jesus Christ.

Politically, the history of this period extending from the death of Alexander (323 B.C.) to the victory of Antiochus the Great, King of Syria (198 B.C.), is entirely taken up by the troubled reigns of the Egyptian Ptolemies, to whose share Palestine had fallen. Under Ptolemy I.,<sup>2</sup> the Jews enjoyed the completest liberty. Their supreme authority at Jerusalem was the high priest, entitled "President of the People." Soter's son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, continued his father's favours to the Jews. He ransomed a hundred thousand of them from slavery and exile and restored them to their country. He it was who, on the advice of Demetrius Phalereus, caused the Sacred Books of the Jews to be translated into Greek for the library of Alexandria. The Jews, meanwhile, to disguise their Judaism, had striven everywhere in the *Diaspora* to adopt the customs and language of the Greeks. Hence for them too the translation of their sacred literature into Greek had become a necessity. Under Philadelphus began the age of hostilities between the Lagidae and the Seleucidae, kings of Syria. The Jews suffered much from the incessant collisions of the rival armies and from the war-tax. After alternations of success and failure under Euergetes (247-221 B.C.), Philopator (221-203 B.C.) and Epiphanes (203-198 B.C.), the Ptolemies were worsted and had to resign all their Asiatic possessions to Antiochus III., surnamed the Great (198 B.C.). This came as a relief to Jerusalem, which had grown disgusted with Egypt, owing to the disorders of the reigns of the last two Ptolemies, and enthusiastically welcomed the triumph of the Syrians. And yet the name of Antiochus was soon to become the name most hated by the whole Jewish nation, while the supremacy of the Lagidae marked the period of the history of Judaism which established its greatness.

<sup>1</sup> The Jews dispersed outside the limits of Palestine.

<sup>2</sup> Ptolemy Soter, son of Lagus (305-284 B.C.).

By their suzerain's favour, the Jews had built themselves synagogues in the principal centres of Hellenism. The strong impulse given by Ezra to Jewish piety had sufficed to maintain a rigid monotheism and fidelity to the Law. But this religion, in spite of its moral superiority over all others, was still only the religion of a people whose language was decaying. If it was to become the religion of the world, it must have a universal language; and Ptolemy Philadelphus supplied it. Greek was at that time for the propagation of religious ideas what Latin later was at Rome for Christian theology, and what English is to-day for the diffusion of the Bible and the Gospel message. By their translation into Greek, the sacred writings of the Hebrews were thrown into the current language of pagan thought and forced upon the attention of every seeker after truth. First to be translated was the "Torah," the original Bible, put together in the fourth century, bearing the name of Moses and destined to reveal to the world the final charter of all human society, viz.: the Decalogue. The second portion of the Hebrew Bible, the "Nebhîm" (Prophets), comprising the Prophetic history of God's people (*Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings*) and the preaching of the Writer-Prophets (from Amos to Malachi), was put together in Palestine in the course of the third century, and was before long translated for the library of Alexandria. Later on there was added to these the third portion of the Hebrew canon, a later collection, which devout Jews never put on a level with the other two and which contained the "Kethubim," or the Sacred Writings, of the earnest Judaism of the last days before the Roman conquest. Other recent works were inserted which were not included in the Hebrew canon, some written in the old ancestral language, e.g. *Ecclesiasticus* and the *First Book of the Maccabees*; others composed originally in Greek, e.g. *The Wisdom of Solomon*. The complete collection was the *Bible of the Diaspora*, the Greek Bible, called the *Septuagint*, not because, according to the pseudo-Aristaeus, the translators were seventy in number, but because the language in which it was written made it capable of becoming the Bible of the seventy races of *Genesis*, in other words the *universal Bible*. The success of this Bible

was so great that the dwellers in Palestine themselves were not slow to adopt it. They afterwards abandoned it only because in their controversies with Judaism the Christians employed it to confound their opponents. The Jews then fell back upon their Hebrew canon with its less accessible language and refused to recognize any other text. In the same way, the Roman Catholics down to our times have refused to accept any other references to the New Testament but those of the Latin Vulgate.

However, a start had been made, "a new language had been created, a Greek full of innumerable Hebraisms, which must be regarded as the most potent instrument of Hellenistic civilization and the source from which Christian theology has drawn a great part of its terminology."<sup>1</sup> The culture promoted by the meeting of Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion reached its apogee in the works of the Alexandrian thinker Philo, a Jew whose philosophical system exercised a powerful influence on the speculations of primitive Christianity. It is owing to the intrusion of Philonism into the Gospel religion that Christian thought, down to the last century, based many of its doctrines, and those not the least important, on the philosophy of the Greeks, rather than on the theology of the Prophets, which was their authentic foundation. The most remarkable consequence of the favour extended to the diffusion of the Jewish faith was the undertaking and success of proselytism. True, Jewish belief, in order to amalgamate at all with western thought, had been compelled to renounce its narrow exclusiveness, but in religious questions that exclusiveness remained unabated. The stranger who, being attracted by Israelite theology, desired to share the benefits of the Mosaic religion and to attain to salvation through it, must not only be converted to Jehovah; he must become a Jew. In the eyes of Levitical "*Elohism*," it was not faith which saved a man, but the fact of being a Jew. And the attraction possessed for the heathen by the simplicity, the high tone and the practical value of Old Testament morality, which contrasted so sharply with

<sup>1</sup> Valeton, "Les Israélites," in *L'histoire des Religions*, by de la Saussaye, 1904, p. 244.

the dissoluteness of Oriental mysteries and the scepticism of Western religions, almost everywhere induced men, whose souls hungered and thirsted for austerity and spirituality, to rally round the Jewish community. Among these proselytes a great number frankly entered the community, submitting to circumcision and the observance of all the prescriptions of the Law. These became thoroughly orthodox Jews and bore the name of "Proselytes of Righteousness." Others crowded to the synagogue, professed monotheism, abolished idols and joined the observers of the Sabbath. They were called "those who feared God." Their lives presented the spectacle of a morality thoroughly imbued with the loftiest principles of the religion of the Prophets. But their broad-mindedness revolted from the practices and rites of Jewish "Levitism." They remained outside, and, if I may say so, above the community; and they bore a name which was not without a tinge of contempt: "Proselytes of the Gate." When St. Paul undertook the conversion of the nations to Jesus Christ, those proselytes were the first to understand him, and a good number of the so-called Pagano-Christians were recruited from among them. Thus the expansion of Judaism in the third century prepared the world for the reception of Christianity, by giving it an enlightened religion with the rules of a perfect morality and the offer of a glorious hope: the coming of a Messiah and deliverer.

*Section 3. The Jews under the Seleucids (198-142 B.C.)  
—Hellenization of Palestine—The Chosen People saved  
by Persecution—The Revolt of the Maccabees—The  
Apocalyptic Book of Daniel.*

Antiochus the Great, the conqueror of the Ptolemies, was received with enthusiasm in Jerusalem. The Jews, who were exasperated by the cruelties of the Egyptian army, helped the Syrian victor to dislodge his adversary from the fortress of Zion, and Antiochus was so favourably impressed that he revived in his dealings with the Jews the friendly attitude of the Ptolemies of the best period. He paid for

the repairing of the Temple and for the regular sacrifices, exempted the citizens of Jerusalem provisionally from all taxes and busied himself with the repopulation of the Holy City. He did more. To show the credit the Jews enjoyed under his reign, he distributed two thousand Jewish families in Lydia and Phrygia, putting in their hands the defence of the fortified towns. His internal administration allowed the worshippers of Jehovah the same liberty as they enjoyed under the Lagidae. Under this regime, for which the Jews were most justly grateful, Greek manners and customs began to find their way into Palestine. It was the converse of the successes achieved during the last century by the Jews of the "*Diaspora*." The latter, like every religious minority which values its faith, were ever on their guard and had resisted all the encroachments of heathen ascendancy. They lived generally in small colonies, carrying with them the roll of the Law, and hastening everywhere to build synagogues, where their national pride could find shelter and their fidelity to Jehovah constant renewal and encouragement. These synagogues soon covered the whole empire and, bound together as they were by their Messianic faith, presented a more solid front to the enemy in the days of Rome's peril than did her own official organization. The secular Hellenism prevalent all over Syria made its way into Palestine in the wake of the Greek colonies and new cities founded from the beginning of the second century on the Graeco-Roman model. Heathenism possessed its own centre of attraction and corruption everywhere in the Holy Land, and the Jewish aristocracy offered no resistance. In the words of a modern historian of Israel: "The brilliant veneer of foreign civilization blinded them, luxury and pleasure attracted them, the world invited them, and they sat down to the banquet."

In the time of Seleucus Philopator (187-176 B.C.) the Hellenization of Jerusalem, begun under his father Antiochus the Great, was momentarily checked by political events. To obtain from the Romans, whom he had dared to attack, the satisfaction of his lust of conquest, Antiochus, who despite his name of "Great" was but a mediocre king, had been

forced to bind himself to pay them an annual tribute. This very soon embarrassed Seleucus' finances. He began by suppressing all subsidies to Jerusalem ; then, listening to the tempting offer of a traitorous Jew named Simon, the commander of the Temple guard and an ardent Philhellene, the king, who was more and more pressed for money, sent Heliodorus, one of his generals, to Jerusalem, to lay hands on the Temple treasure. The Jews were filled with consternation, and Heliodorus, in spite of the resistance of Oniah, the high priest, was about to enter the sanctuary by force, when, according to the tradition, a horseman from heaven swooped down upon him and stretched him powerless upon the threshold. Oniah, moved to pity and no doubt afraid of the probable consequences of the miracle, prayed that he might not die. Heliodorus, having recovered from the shock, returned to Seleucus and dissuaded him from the pursuit of an object whose perilous nature he had had occasion to realize. Simon none the less continued his intrigues for the Hellenization of Palestine, and Oniah was compelled to go in person to the king to plead the cause of Jehovah and His outraged Law. Matters had reached this stage, when Heliodorus (in 176 B.C.) poisoned Seleucus in the hope of usurping his throne. His hope was foiled. For Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, did not allow the crown to slip from his grasp. Taking advantage of the absence of Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, in Rome, as a hostage to guarantee the payment of the tribute, Antiochus had himself proclaimed king, and took the name of Epiphanes. The Roman senate looked on without interfering, reserving Demetrius' revenge for a favourable opportunity. Despite his surname of "the Illustrious," Antiochus IV. was no more than eccentric. He was haunted by dreams of glory, and plunged headlong into the most hazardous expeditions, notably against Egypt, the hereditary foe ; and when, on a sign from Rome, he went home foiled to his own kingdom, he would vent his anger as he passed on the feeble vassals whom he found in his path. None suffered more than Palestine, and that because it was badly protected by its governing classes.

Down to the reign of Seleucus, the clergy, in spite of the follies of the nobility, had respected and won respect for the dignity of their office. But now Philhellenism in Jerusalem had become a perfect Graeco-mania. The family of the high priests itself yielded to the corrupting influence. By court intrigues the priest Joshua, taking the Greek name of Jason, deposed his brother Oniah, and assumed the high priesthood. He paid a good price, and Antiochus had always an ear for the man who did not come empty-handed. Jason undertook to build a Greek gymnasium right in the heart of Jerusalem, and sent some of the Temple money to Tyre, to contribute towards the festival of Heracles. These acts of disloyalty brought him little profit. An intriguer of the same race as himself, a priest, called Oniah, took the name of Menelaus, and usurped the high priesthood by outbidding him. To pay Antiochus, Menelaus sold the golden vessels of the Temple. Then the aged Oniah, the ex-high priest deposed by Jason, quitted his retirement and came to Zion to oppose these scandalous proceedings. Menelaus procured his murder. This time the people, who had with difficulty endured the arrogance of the aristocracy, whether clerical or lay, and their religious treason, rose, and civil war made the streets of Jerusalem run with blood. Menelaus, who still had the sovereign's ear, attempted to keep his position by force. He was brought to bay in the citadel. But Antiochus meanwhile returning from one of his unlucky expeditions against Egypt, was beside himself with fury when he heard that the rabble of Jerusalem had dared to rise against his favourite. He entered Jerusalem, restored Menelaus, pillaged the Temple and carried a crowd of captives to Antioch. From that moment the Hellenization of the Jews by force was decided upon; and there commenced an age of religious persecutions, now disguised, now openly violent, like those which the French Huguenots experienced, and which produced in the hills of Judaea revolts like those of the "Camisards" in the Cévennes. The soldiery of Antiochus would have had nothing to learn from Louis XIV.'s dragoons. Suppression of the Sabbath, prohibition of circumcision, compulsion to eat unclean animals, destruction of the sacred

books, official desecration of the Temple when the altar of Jehovah was made to serve as a base for that of Jupiter, Jews driven at the sword's point to take part in the sacrilegious worship, false accusations, arrests, massacres and pillages . . . such were the means employed by Antiochus for the conversion of the chosen people !

Never has the blast of persecution swept more furiously over men's consciences, and never has it brought them a greater blessing. The invasion of Hellenism was on the point of ruining the Jewish faith ; Antiochus' persecution saved it. "The more the upper classes gave themselves up to power, the more patriotism showed itself and grew among the masses, and oppression only increased its strength. What had been a mere habit of mind now became a party cry. Instinctive antipathy against the foreigner turned to hate ; intellectual convictions were ready to express themselves in deeds, and loyalty grew to enthusiasm. The liberties which the old petty kings of Judah had taken with the consent of the nation, in spite of the Law and the Prophets, were refused to a mighty autocrat by a people without fame and unarmed ; and the blood of the martyrs did more than had formerly been done by the most eloquent preaching and the most threatening prophecies."<sup>1</sup> When a people rises to fight, it very soon finds a leader, sometimes by the merest accident. In the village of Modin, near Lydda in Judaea, there lived an old priest named Mattathias, and his five stout sons around him shared his faith and fervent devotion to the Law. When the soldiers of Antiochus came to Modin to establish the pagan worship by force, Mattathias had the courage to rise and forbid them. The Syrian officer paid no heed. Then the patriot fell upon him and slew him before his altar, and thus gave the signal for a holy war. The zealots themselves were taken by surprise and, having as yet no means of defence, fled with Mattathias to the hill-country. The Greeks hunted them out. A band of the poor wretches, surprised in the desert on a Sabbath would not raise a finger in self-defence, so as not to break the law of the day of rest.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Reuss, *La Bible*, i. p. 61.



They were massacred in cold blood, but this cowardly act raised the fury of the rebels to fever-heat. Mattathias found it easy enough to persuade them that what was needed to save religion was not victims but heroes. They armed as best they could. Knowing every inch of their mountains and finding sympathizers everywhere, the *Chasidim*, or "Righteous Ones," as they were called, entered upon a guerilla warfare, in which prayer combined with cunning supplied the place of strength, and performed wonders. It was a return to the days of the early exploits of David. On the death of Mattathias, his second son Judas took his place as leader, assisted by Jonathan, the eldest, who was the diplomatist of the party. From every side came reinforcements, swelling the numbers of the insurgents. Antiochus, who was busy on the Eastern frontiers of his kingdom, did not suspect the gravity of the insurrection and kept on sending incapable generals only to be beaten by Judas, the Jean Cavalier of those Jewish mountaineers. So great was the enthusiasm which surrounded the champion of freedom of thought, that his troops, invincible in their desultory method of warfare, dubbed him *Maccabaeus* or "the Hammer," to commemorate the crushing defeats he had inflicted on the enemy;<sup>1</sup> just as, in French history, Charles after the conquest of the Saracens was surnamed *Martel* (Hammer). Through skirmish after skirmish, the band of the Maccabees came to the gates of Jerusalem. The Syrians, panic-stricken by this audacious move, shut themselves up in the citadel, and Judas, already in possession of the rest of the town, entered the Temple, while the crowd around him were beside themselves with joy. The sanctuary was cleansed and restored to the worship of Jehovah, in December, 165 B.C., and this exploit, in which the glory of the Maccabees reached its zenith, has never ceased to be

<sup>1</sup> *Macchabah* is Hebrew for "Hammer." The four books of *Maccabees* differ widely in character and in merit. 1 *Maccabees* is a historical work quite analogous to historical works within the Hebrew canon. 2 *Maccabees* is a kind of legend of the Jewish saints, very popular in Christian countries in the Middle Ages, and dating from the last century B.C. 3 *Maccabees* is a work of fiction on a level with the religious romances *Tobit*, *Judith*, etc. 4 *Maccabees* is a philosophical

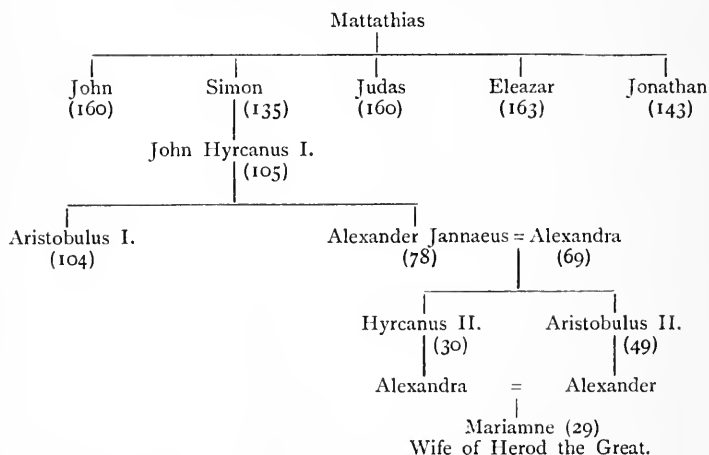
commemorated annually by the Jews as one of the greatest events in their national history.<sup>1</sup>

The cause of the rebels was on the road to triumph, when an unforeseen event jeopardized the fruit of all their victories. Suddenly the news spread that the Roman Senate had just released their royal hostage, Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, whose throne Epiphanes had usurped. Immediately the vassals of Antiochus, who was detested for his cruelties, flocked in crowds to greet the lawful ruler. Backed by this enthusiasm, Demetrius easily overcame the last show of resistance. Most obstinate of all was Judas Maccabaeus, who, unable to conquer, was content to fall fighting. The cause of independence would have died with the death of its greatest martyr, had not an adventurer giving himself out to be a son of Antiochus Epiphanes, kindled a dynastic war in Syria. With the support of Egypt, he counterbalanced the successes of Demetrius. Jonathan, the brother and successor of Judas, took advantage of these internal dissensions to consolidate the Jewish position. By skilful negotiations now

dissertation on the superiority of reason over the passions. 3 and 4 would seem to have been written between 40 and 70 A.D.

#### THE ASMONAEAN DYNASTY.

(The dates are the years B.C. in which each died.)



<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Feast of the Dedication, *John* x. 22.

with the one, now with the other of the two Syrian pretenders, and at times even with both simultaneously, he made himself so indispensable that on his death the King of Syria, to pay for the services he had rendered, renounced his suzerain rights over Palestine. The citadel of Zion was evacuated by the satrap's garrison. And thus, after a desperate war unsurpassed by any other in brilliant exploits and extending over more than twenty years, Simon, the last son of Mattathias, was proclaimed by a grateful nation Prince, General and High Priest.

To this heroic period, in which the oppressed Jews seemed to have recovered the virtues and faith of the ancient followers of Jehovah, belongs the last and most astonishing book of the Old Testament, the *Book of Daniel*.<sup>1</sup> Written half in Hebrew, half in Aramaic, and composed of divers fragments collected around a real or typical hero, this book, which is the Apocalypse of the Old Covenant, brings us echoes of the mysticism of the pietists, the fanaticism of the patriots and the exasperation of those who looked for the coming of the Messiah, in pages which, as in all apocalypses, combine obscurities of history and of prophecy. Here as in a concert whose notes, soothing or terrifying, have impressed all ages, you may hear and recognize every voice: that of the heirs of Ezekiel with their devotion to the Law and their theocratic fervour; that of the heirs of the “Second Isaiah,” with their assertion of salvation arising out of extreme misery and appearing the more suddenly as the distress is deeper; that of the heirs of Zechariah and Malachi declaring that the day of pagan empires is past, that the dominion of the oppressors is on the eve of utter annihilation, and that the kingdom of the saints is about to be manifested in glory and come down from the clouds in the likeness of a son of Man. Sin will be overcome, the martyrs will rise from the dead, and the age of the Messiah will place in

<sup>1</sup> Written about 170-160 B.C. The son of Sirach writing about 190 B.C. does not mention Daniel in the very full list he gives of the men of God of note in sacred history. The Aramaic portions of the book may have been composed in any of the last six centuries B.C. The Hebrew portions recall the style of the last books of the Old Testament.

Israel's hands the sceptre of the whole world. All these declarations and sublime visions, coming at a time when the chosen people was reduced to a mere handful of rebels struggling desperately in their mountain fastnesses against the irresistible tide of mighty empires, constitute one of the most unheard-of acts of faith ever performed or witnessed by mankind. We may say that in the *Book of Daniel* the Old Covenant surpassed itself in producing a work of edification and consolation, which during long centuries was to be the Christian Church's spiritual food and its philosophy of history. But it was a swan-song. Scarcely had the Temple been recovered, when the elements fused for a time by the enthusiasm of a holy war sprang apart. As religious leaders, the Asmonaeans had saved Judaism: but as kings, they were its ruin. From this point the chosen people squandered their vital energies in party-struggles.

*Section 4. The Kingdom of Judaea (142-63 B.C.)—Rise and Fall of the Asmonaeon Dynasty—Origin of the Pharisees and Sadducees—Conquest of Palestine by the Romans (63 B.C.).*

Dynastic history records not a few dagger-thrusts which, by cutting short the life of a good monarch, arrest suddenly the whole progress of his nation and cast a kind of evil fate on his descendants. Simon, the Asmonaeon, the heir of thirty years of glorious struggling, was entirely engrossed in the revival of his people, when he was basely murdered at the end of a banquet by Ptolemy, son of Abobus, his son-in-law, in the eighth year of his rule. By a miracle, his son John escaped from the conspiracy which was to have set Ptolemy on the throne. He had a hard struggle to become ethnarch in his father's place and to retain the crown which, after the traitor Ptolemy, Antiochus VII., the last Seleucid worthy the name of king, tried to wrest from him. John, surnamed Hyrcanus, was saved by the unhappy war against the Parthians undertaken by Antiochus, who fell on the field of battle. While the heirs of Antiochus were wasting their substance in internal wars, John Hyrcanus

re-established his principality and enlarged it by conquests. He defeated the Edomites and imposed circumcision on them, and triumphed over the Samaritans and destroyed their temple on Mount Gerizim. But his reign, for all its semblance of victory, before long paid dearly for its glories. Edom (Idumaea) was too heavy a burden for the shoulders of Judaea. From the first day it prepared for revenge and wreaked it under Herod, the Idumaeen king. The ruin of the Samaritan sanctuary fanned the religious hatred between the two branches of Israel and made reconciliation impossible. Finally the military successes of Hyrcanus gave umbrage to the puritans, the *Chasidim*, who had only supported the cause of the Maccabees because they were religious chiefs, but offered a violent opposition the moment political ambitions made the prince in Hyrcanus overshadow and overrule the priest.

When the Asmonaeans had removed Alkimos and with him the family of Zadok from the high priesthood, the puritans had acclaimed the accession of the Maccabees to the pontificate as a return to the true faith. But now that they too had let their ardour cool and were proving as irreligious and friendly to Hellenism as the old high priests had been, the *Chasidim*, henceforward called "Pharisees" or "those set apart," insisted on a separation of powers and demanded the return of the high priesthood to its lawful heirs, the sons of Aaron. Hyrcanus, and after him his son Aristobulus, who took the name of king at the moment when the star of the Asmonaeans was beginning to pale (105-104 B.C.), did nothing to calm the rising anger of the zealots, and attempted to govern, relying solely on the Hellenizing party consisting of their courtiers and the ancient priestly aristocracy of the sons of Zadok. These latter, whose influence preponderated in all political and social questions, gave their name to the whole party, the "Zadokites" or "Sadducees." The Pharisees, cast away by a power which they had helped to establish, and which was betraying all their hopes, broke with it, under Jannaeus (104-78 B.C.), the brother of Aristobulus, and formed a religious party representing the old traditions, in opposition to the national secular party then in power.

Thus a rancorous fratricidal struggle began, multiplying intestine quarrels and fomenting civil war, till the day when the Romans, called in by both parties, brought them into agreement by crushing both alike. Alexander Jannaeus, a high priest-king of heathen life and manners, had exasperated the Pharisees, and the kingdom could not be restored even to comparative peace till his Ethiopian guard had massacred fifty thousand zealots. His widow Alexandra, by her energy and queenly qualities, poured balm for a time on the national wounds, but the rivalries of her two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, revived the trouble. Hyrcanus had been given the priesthood and Aristobulus the command of the armies. Each of them wished to have the whole power to himself. Hyrcanus, feeble and harmless, had a counsellor who gave him no peace, Antipater the Idumaeon; Aristobulus, to cut his ambitions short, took advantage of his position as head of the army, and by a bold stroke seized the crown.

At this juncture, Pompey, who had just dealt the Seleucid monarchy its death-blow, was passing by with his legions. Both parties called for help. Pompey came with all speed and played the part of umpire after the Roman fashion: in other words, he subdued Judaea. Aristobulus, realizing his danger too late, shut himself up in Jerusalem, but after a few months of heroic resistance, the city, which so many times already had astonished conquerors and felt the weight of their anger, succumbed. The carnage was appalling. Pompey entered the sanctuary, but instead of desecrating it, ordered the worship to continue. But he took care to level the walls of Jerusalem with the ground. Then he carried off Aristobulus to grace his triumph, and left the feeble Hyrcanus, with his priesthood and title of ethnarch, under the close guardianship of Antipater the Edomite (63 B.C.). Thus sank the glory of the Asmonaeans and rose the star of the Herods.

*Section 5. The Final Century—Judaea under the Herods—  
The Advent of the Messiah and the Forerunner John the  
Baptist—The Messiah's Ministry—The Messiah Jesus  
crucified—Jerusalem destroyed and the Survivors scattered  
(70 A.D.).*

The Romans at one blow had destroyed the freedom of Israel for ever. Pharisees and Sadducees, who had degenerated from parties into sects, ought to have been reconciled on the ruins of their political ambitions. But their fanaticism, goaded on by passing events, only embittered their disputes. Each in its own way betraying the *Jehovism* which the nation's misfortunes ought to have revived, these two *Elohism* tendencies precipitated by their conflicts the religious disintegration of Israel, while at the same time preparing the way by their theological evolution for the advent of the Gospel. The place filled in the *Elohism* of natural religions by sacrifices, and later in Roman Catholic *Elohism* by meritorious works, was occupied in the Jewish by the "Law." To the Sadducees the "Law" was the ancient writ, the Hebrew *Torah*. They rejected all doctrinal innovations such as the belief in angels and in a resurrection, as well as all the restrictions imposed on personal liberty by the legal prescriptions of Pharisaic ritualism. Their fidelity to Moses was combined with political opportunism. They looked for the Messiah's kingdom not from heaven, but from the triumph of armed force. As their way of life, in marked contrast with the haughty austerity of the *Chasidim*, adapted itself to the manners and customs introduced into Palestine since the Greek period, we must seek among them for the origin of that practical philosophy, known by the name of "Wisdom," which in spite of some very marked theological divergences,<sup>1</sup> helped so much to fix the intellectual attitude of the Jews in the days of Jesus Christ. This philosophy, of which *Ecclesiastes* is the only representative in the canon of the Old Testament, vaunts the wisdom bestowed by knowledge of Jehovah and exposes the vanity of everything which is

<sup>1</sup> Notably on the subjects of angelology and demonology.

neither illumined nor quickened by the light of God. Its principal monuments are, in Palestine, the *Proverbs* of Jesus, son of Sirach,<sup>1</sup> and among the Jews of Alexandria, the *Wisdom of Solomon*.<sup>2</sup> In an age when scepticism was gaining ground everywhere, these books, called "Apocrypha" or "hidden" books, because the Jews did not read from them at divine service,<sup>3</sup> were useful in two ways. In the first place, they prevented doubt from degenerating into unbelief, by showing that, in spite of the mysteries which surround us, experience proves that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. In the second place, they provided conscience with a guide of practical morality, which without any very lofty aim had yet the merit of a strongly-marked individualism. In this respect, this philosophy of practical wisdom was connected in some measure with the preaching of Ezekiel and the "Second Isaiah," who insist so strongly on personal responsibility; and it prepared the minds of men for the understanding and acceptance of the Gospel, which was the most urgent appeal ever addressed to the conscience of the individual.

Whatever interest may attach to the Sadducee theology or their philosophy of practical wisdom, the fact remains that the Pharisee is the authentic representative of Judaism, with its faith, its life and its hopes. It is in the Pharisee's conscience that the *Elohistic* doctrine reaches its highest development and also its widest aberration. It is the Pharisee's religion alone which accounts for the failure of *Jehovism* in the person of the Messiah, and which gives us the key to that mystery and scandal in one, the Son of God

<sup>1</sup> Also called *Ecclesiasticus*, or *Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach*. Written about the end of the second century B.C.

<sup>2</sup> In this literary cycle we may include *Tobit*, probably written in Egypt during the first century B.C.

<sup>3</sup> All the Apocrypha (also called Antilegomena, or disputed books) belong to the latest period of Jewish literature. They are all excluded from the Hebrew Bible, but appear in the Greek and Latin versions. The Roman Church recognizes no distinction between the canonical books and these, which Luther and the Reformers in their turn admitted as "useful and good to read," though they placed them in a special division after the canonical books. Our Bible is certainly the poorer for the exclusion of *1 Maccabees*, *Ecclesiasticus* and *Wisdom*. See Appendix ix.



crucified by the official representatives and authentic heirs of God's revelation on earth. It is not enough to condemn or to be indignant; we must understand. There is an unfortunate habit among Christians of attaching to Pharisaic zeal the exclusively unfavourable interpretation given it by the polemics of the first days of the new Covenant. The Pharisees were far from being all hypocrites in our sense of the word and from regarding the Law as a vain pretext for pride and self-righteousness. As in every human society, tares grew among them side by side with the good grain; but their sect none the less, at that time, represented the élite of Israel. Hillel and Gamaliel bear famous names, and St. Paul had no cause to be ashamed of having been their disciple. Take the various passages where St. Paul recalls his past and put them together, so as to form what might be called "the testimony of St. Paul to Saul of Tarsus." That testimony is an "apologia." St. Paul does not boast, but neither has he any regrets. His Pharisaism, so far from leaving him a legacy of humiliating memories, is always quoted by him as a proof that at all times, to the extent of his powers and lights, he had worked for his salvation and had served God with a clear conscience. "Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, as even ye all are this day (cf. *Rom.* x. 2). And I persecuted this Way unto the death (*Acts* xxii. 3, 4). And I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (*Gal.* i. 14). He now realizes that he was himself a blasphemer when he thought he was punishing blasphemy, but, instead of regarding his violence as a crime, he declares that his intentions were pure; "howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (*1 Tim.* i. 13). Saul of Tarsus was worthy of St. Paul. Both before and after his conversion he can say of himself: "I laboured more abundantly than they all" (*1 Cor.* xv. 10). Besides, that is certainly what he means the Philippians to understand, when he maintains that, if any one has a right to salvation apart from Christ, he possesses it more than any other; for he had

been denied no human privilege, and, more than that, did not scruple to declare himself "blameless" as touching the righteousness of the Law (*Phil.* iii. 6).

What did the Pharisee of Tarsus understand by the righteousness of the Law? Here again the conscience of Christendom has passed a severe and summary judgement. In the treatise *Shabbath* (fol. 30, col. A) occur the words: "Prayer and sacrifice lengthen temporal life. The *Torah* wins life eternal. . . ." "The *Torah* is the only road to eternal life," says the *Midrash Vajikrah Rabbah* (par. 29); and this declaration recurs incessantly in the books of Rabbinical theology. That is to say, other things being equal, the promises and hopes which the Christian finds in Christ, the Pharisee found in the *Torah*, that voice of heaven, surrounded by all the accompaniments of sacred traditions and appearing to his fervent soul not only as a divine decree, but as an embodiment of the Godhead, enthroned by the side of God Himself. It is above his conscience; it gives his conscience its laws. His religion finds everything in it and expects everything from it. "Ye search the Scriptures," said Jesus to the Pharisees of His day, "because ye think that in them ye have eternal life" (*John* v. 39). How shall the Pharisee obtain that righteousness of the Law which procures eternal life?—"Every commandment observed," replies the treatise *Berachoth* (ch. ix. § 4), "is a merit acquired: every commandment transgressed is a sin committed. Each transgression is a separate transgression; each merit is a separate merit." "If a man fulfil the whole Law," says the treatise *Shabbath* (fol. 31, col. 2), he is *zadick*, pure in the eyes of God." "When we shall appear before God's judgement-seat, the angels will be divided into two camps, the one accusing us of sins committed, the other defending us in the name of merits acquired. If the number of merits outstrip that of the sins, we shall be declared just and we shall receive eternal life" (*Midrash Shemoth Rabbah*, ch. xxix., and *Bamidbar Rabbah*, ch. xiv.). It is plain, the Rabbinical notion of justice is essentially external and implies only the double idea: justification and reward.

The coldness of this material conception of the relations between man and God is so revolting to a Christian conscience that it is difficult to preserve the openness of mind without which we cannot do justice to the Rabbi's idea of his duties and hopes. But it must not be forgotten that the Cross of Calvary offended the Jews of that time as much and even more than Judaism offends us now. The condemnation of the Messiah by His own people and the failure of Christianity among the Jews are two facts which abundantly prove how entirely the idea of redemption had become foreign to the spirit of the chosen people. The Jew had his Law, and his Law was everything to him. If he obeyed it, he was perfectly secure. Salvation was assured him by the faithfulness of Jehovah. And even if he did not feel that he was blameless with regard to the commandments, the Jew still hoped on, firmly believing with his masters and teachers, that by means of a vicarious justice, the supererogatory merits of the Patriarchs and Moses would be imputed to him.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the beliefs of the time, which were deep and sincere. Let us now take the Pharisee, the man who has voluntarily set himself apart to avoid defilement by contact with a lax religion, and to dedicate his whole life to meditation and the observance of the Law. He knows that "those who put their trust in the Torah attain to life and those who turn away from it find death" (Tr. *Shabbath* 81, 13). He orders his life accordingly, and this is his prayer: "I give thee thanks, O God, for that thou hast allotted me my place among those who dwell in schools and synagogues. . . . My goal is the life to come, whereas others come only to the pit of destruction." In the midst of this puritan society, so proud of its privileges and so sure of the reward to come, let us take lastly the disciple of Gamaliel, "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews (*Phil.* iii. 5), a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees (*Acts* xxiii. 6), as touching zeal, persecuting the Church, as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless (*Phil.* iii. 6)." We have two alternatives: either the beliefs of the Judaism of Jesus' time are mere empty words, or else the

<sup>1</sup> See *John* v. 45.

Rabbi Saul of Tarsus, in perfect security and with a clear conscience before God and men, had every right to make the Apostle's declaration at the close of his career : " I have fought the good fight ; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness " (2 *Tim.* iv. 8). If Saul of Tarsus had spoken thus, he would have been a prey to the most deplorable illusion, and that is what St. Paul demonstrated in *Romans* vii. 14-25. But an error is not a crime, and an error of this kind, so far from being the source of internal disorders and moral struggles, makes them impossible by suppressing their cause. We cannot but recognize the grandeur of this religious conception. Among human attempts to found salvation on human virtue and on the merits of the saints, none has been purer. But at the same time, it is impossible to conceive a more violent misinterpretation of the principles which gave birth to Judaism. For Judaism owed its being to the Prophets, and Messianic Prophecy would hear of nothing but the fallen state of man and the grace of Jehovah. Pharisaism, in its moral consequences, anticipated the errors of Roman Catholicism. The former induced a state of haughty self-satisfaction ; the latter bred the agony of a salvation for ever receding from the seeker's grasp. In both the result was a fanaticism knowing nothing of the conditions of true religion, and multiplying at every step the external practices which, under a show of leading to eternal life, block and encumber the road to it. We might even apply to the Pharisee of the age in which Jesus was born the judgement passed recently by a prelate of the Roman Church on contemporary Roman Catholicism : " The religious conscience is falling asleep . . . the last symptom of decadence is the extraordinary increase of the most diverse forms of devout piety, which are the stunted and puny expressions of a starved religious sense, and a kind of parasitic growth born of weakness and itself in turn increasing it, like those lichens which cover the branches of old trees without ever filling the place of the vanished foliage. . . . Although each of these pious acts taken singly is ordinarily capable of an acceptable interpretation, and may be of great use, yet it cannot be denied that by their excessive number, the too great importance they assume and the

vanity generally involved in their observance, they stand for *a retrograde movement of the conscience, a kind of instinctive relapse into pagan fanaticism*. Meanwhile, souls lose the last remnant of vitality and pine away in a mystical and sterile pursuit of far-off hopes."

This expectation, in the Pharisees' time, was the advent of the Messiah, a glorious Messiah, who should avenge the chosen people for every insult, deliver it from all its enemies, and slake the hatred of the pure for all the encroachments of heathen and secular thought, but especially Greek thought, into the Jewish theology and worship. This hope, in which breathes the passion of expiring Judaism, gave birth to the "Apocalypses," in which we seem to hear the last beats of the heart of Israel, before it was buried for ever beneath the rubbish of Talmudic literature. These "Apocalypses" bring us back to the firm ground of history, for it was history that inspired them. The last of the Prophets had said that the Messiah would appear on the day when all seemed lost. Under the persecutions of Epiphanes, hope revived. The Messiah was coming! For one moment, men hailed his triumph in the victory of the Maccabees. But they were deceived, for the Asmonaeans were traitors to the cause. On a sudden, fresh disasters fell upon the martyrs of Judaea. Zion was captured by the Romans. The Holy of Holies was desecrated and national independence abolished. Israel groaned under the sceptre of Herod, the hated Edomite. Was not the cup of humiliation full? The Messiah was coming! He must come, for the more the Jews suffered, the sooner did they expect to see the revenge promised to their nation. The *Book of Enoch*, the *Psalms of Solomon* and all the writings whose name is legion between the sack of Jerusalem by Pompey and its annihilation by Titus, present different forms of the insensate dream of a Messianic era in which, the wrath of Jehovah having swept over all nations like a fiery tempest, Jerusalem according to some, according to others Mount Sinai, should see the whole earth glorifying Israel, and converted to the Messiah. Although the day of the Son of Man was to come as a surprise when least expected, yet there were to be premonitory signs to warn the faithful.

Enoch and Elijah, of whom tradition said that they had not died, since Jehovah "took" Enoch, and Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire, were looked upon as having been set apart by God with a view to the "last days." To them the Jewish "apocalypses" assigned the duty of preparing the ways of the Messiah, and St. John's *Apocalypse* recalls this expectation when he speaks of the "two witnesses" who "shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."<sup>1</sup>

Herod the Great, whose inauspicious reign extended over forty-four years, and who was still alive when Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, left no stone unturned to keep up by his countless cruelties and sacrilegious acts the religious excitement of the Pharisees. He re-built Samaria and called it Sebaste, the city of Augustus. While he was engaged in re-building the Temple of Jehovah, he erected temples to Greek deities, and enriched Jerusalem with a hippodrome and an amphitheatre: all this at the expense of the Jews, who groaned under his taxes and were exasperated at seeing the Messiah's city handed over to all the powers of Anti-christ. Plots thickened around the vindictive tyrant, who replied by reprisals of unspeakable savagery. Scribes and Rabbis scoured the country to feed the people's hope. A few succeeded in winning such fame that they were taken for Elijah and honoured as though they were forerunners of the Messiah. At times these outbursts of Messianic fervour were drowned in blood, for Herod, becoming more and more cruel and suspicious, laid wicked hands on all that gave him umbrage. Zealots, high priests, civil or religious authorities, his wife Mariamne the Asmonaeon, his own sons Alexander, Aristobulus and Antipater, all fell victims to his persecuting mania. Small wonder then that in the last year of his reign, when he heard from wise men of the East that the Messiah had just been born, he put to death all the infants of the village where the scribes affirmed that according to the Prophets, the Christ must come into the world.<sup>2</sup> This measure

<sup>1</sup> *Rev.* xi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Matt.* ii. 16. Concerning the massacre of the innocents, Renan accuses early Christian tradition of blackening Herod's character by deliberate inventions, and

of the dying Herod is in perfect keeping with his methods of government.

The wise men of the East were right. While the Messianic hope was venting itself among the Pharisees in more and more insane imaginings and the cruelty of the Edomite tyrant strove to extirpate it by useless excesses of violence, Bethlehem, the village sung of by the Prophets, had witnessed the advent of Him Whose miraculous birth was destined to change the face of the world. He was born, as the "Second Isaiah" had prophesied, without form or comeliness, and with no beauty that men should desire Him when they saw Him.<sup>1</sup> The Sanhedrin and the teachers of the Temple do not seem to have taken any notice of the event, which did not trouble Herod's court beyond a day. But the touching circumstances of the birth and presentation of Jesus in the Temple show that among the humbler sons of Israel there were still a few who could hear the voice of angels, understand the prophecies of the Messiah and recognize in the new-born child the Saviour Who should bring to all who hungered for righteousness the "consolation of Israel." The shepherds, Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elisabeth, the aged Simeon, and Anna the Prophetess, cross the dim scene of history with their songs of joy, and let a gleam of sunshine break through the cloudy sky. But the clouds close up again behind them and the gloom thickens. On Herod's death, the Romans despairing of peace in a province where every political and religious passion was rife, divided the tyrant's dominion into three parts and deprived his sons of royal rank. Philip received

points out that Jesus was not yet born when Herod died at Jericho (*Histoire d'Israel*, vol. 5, p. 302). But it is now admitted that the beginning of the Christian era is dated several years too late. According to traditional chronology, Herod died four years before the birth of Jesus. But the actual sequence of events carries his reign into the first few months of the Saviour's life. It is well known that down to the eighth century the years were counted from the death of Christ. Dionysius Exiguus, a learned monk of Scythia living in the sixth century, thought it more logical to make the Christian era start at the birth of Christ. He went through the calculations afresh, and made a mistake of at least four years. Some time after the Dionysian cycle was adopted by the Church, and the Christian era ever since has been four or even more years behind the true historical chronology.

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* liii. 3.

the northern districts beyond the Jewish zone: thanks to which he reigned peaceably for over forty years. His brother Antipater, under the title of Herod II., governed Galilee and the country beyond Jordan. This incapable and violent ruler would have left no mark in history had it not been for his quarrels with the new-born Christianity. These, however, have made for ever memorable his injustice and incapacity. To Herod's third son, Archelaus, fell the difficult task of ruling Jerusalem. Cruel and hated like his father before him, he could not keep his position long. While he was absent in Rome to confirm his title, a terrible revolt broke out in Jerusalem and spread as far as Galilee. The blood of his victims cried aloud for vengeance. Varus restored order by adding two thousand crucifixions to the already long and bloody list. But peace bought at such a price is short-lived. After ten years of suffering, Samaritans and Jews, for once in their history, agreed, and demanded the removal of Archelaus. Augustus put in his place Quirinius, a Roman sub-prefect, who assumed the title of governor and fixed his residence in Caesarea, in A.D. 6 (really 10 or perhaps 14 years after the birth of Christ). This move, for all its pacific intentions, completed the popular exasperation. The Herods were bad Jews; still they were of Semitic race and kinsmen of Israel. But the Roman procurator was a foreigner and a common idolater. If he remained, it was all over with the traditions and the Law. To avenge the insult, the zealots became assassins. They first endeavoured under Judas the Galilean to stir up a rising of the whole country<sup>1</sup> and to repeat the exploits of Judas Maccabaeus. But the days of Antiochus were long past, and the Roman legions made short work of patriotic outbursts. Under the six successive procurators of Judaea to the reign of Agrippa, Caligula's boon companion and creature, there was a succession of rebellions under false Messiahs, such as Theudas with the promise of crossing Jordan dryshod, or that Egyptian spoken of by Josephus and the *Acts*, who boasted that he could overthrow the walls of Jerusalem with a mere word and had collected four thousand armed followers in

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of a general census undertaken by Quirinius.



the desert.<sup>1</sup> In this confusion, Israel was tossed to and fro between the Sadducees with their Hellenic philosophy and cold reason, the Pharisees with their withering legalism and apocalyptic fanaticism, the Essenes, those puritan extremists who thought that even the Pharisees were too lax and that only degenerate Jews could still visit the Temple, and finally, the Herodians who through race-hatred longed for a return of the questionable rule of the Herods. Between all these and a crowd of other factions, sprung from local unrest or passing discontent, the chosen people lost its bearings and wandered aimlessly like sheep without a shepherd.

Suddenly, a rumour flew over Judaea that a man had appeared on the banks of the Jordan, whose habits and speech recalled the austerity and the recriminations of the Prophets. His name was John. Already the surname of "Baptist" began to be applied to him to mark the strange and singularly impressive act which accompanied his words, the act of baptism. And crowds began to flock towards the Jordan. They came from Judaea, Galilee and Peraea. His preaching was accompanied by no miracles, yet it lashed men's consciences. To soldiers he said: "Do violence to no man"; to publicans, "Extort no more than that which is appointed you"; to the multitudes, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none." And when the honoured chiefs of his people, Sadducees or Pharisees, came to him, he greeted them with these words: "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now is the axe also laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."<sup>2</sup> Bold words like these stirred the soul of Israel to its depths. It seemed like a return of the great days of Samuel, and the crowd, hanging on the Prophet's lips, exclaimed: "What then must we do?" Then, John, taking each one

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii. Cf. *Acts* v. 36, xxi. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke* iii. 1-20. Cf. *Matt.* i. 1-17, xiv. 1-12; *Mark* i. 1-8, vi. 14, etc.

apart, made him confess his sins, and then made those who repented go down into the Jordan, so that the stream, which at Elisha's bidding had cleansed Naaman, might also wash away the sins of the humbled crowd, and that the stepping out of the river might mark the fresh beginning of their moral life, the start of a new life dedicated to the kingdom that was to come.

The act of baptism, which originated with the Baptist, was not a rite. It was the outward manifestation or sign of taking the side of Jehovah ; a kind of enlisting in the service of the Messiah-King, who was coming, with His fan in His hand, thoroughly to cleanse His threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into His garner, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. An echo of the fierce predictions of the Jewish apocalypse still lingered about the passionate utterance of the Baptist, but it was drowned by the mightier voice of the *Jehovism* of the Prophets declaring to the human conscience the moral conditions of God's service. Ancestral privilege, national pride, the value of rites and the merits of legal observance, in fact all the lying structure of the *Elohism* religion, fell to the ground at the sound of John's voice. John recognized nothing beyond God and conscience. The baptism in Jordan, while recruiting members for the new Israel, laid the foundation of the worship of God "in spirit and truth." The crowd for a moment took him for the Messiah. But he denied it. "Art thou Elijah?" they asked, but, with his wonderful humility, he denied that also. And yet, it was precisely the rôle of Elijah, the forerunner, that he was filling, for the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make ready the way of the Lord! Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" was the very voice which the seers of old had foretold and which pious Israelites yearned, like Simeon, to hear in their hearts. John the Baptist, besides, was well aware of it, for he knew and announced only two baptisms ; his own, a baptism of water and repentance, full of sorrow and dark with the shadows of the betrayal of the Old Covenant ; and that of the Messiah Who was coming after him and the latchet of Whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose, a baptism of spirit

and power, a glorious baptism, illumined by the graces of the New Covenant offered and fulfilled by the Redeemer. The Prophet of the Jordan was at the height of his fame, when there came to his baptism a Galilean whom the crowds had never yet seen. That it was He Whose birth thirty years before had made the Idumaeon dynasty tremble for a moment, nobody, not even Herod, knew. And if among those who flocked to the Baptist, there were any of the lawyers of the Temple whom Jesus at twelve years of age had amazed by His knowledge of divine truths, the aged Rabbis did not recognize Him. But John pointed Him out to the crowd under the title which revealed His supernatural mission: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" He, then, was the Messiah. From that moment, the disciples of John began to desert him, to follow Him Whom the apocalypses had announced under the enigmatical title which He applied to Himself: the Son of Man. In no long time, all eyes were fastened upon Him 'He must increase," said John, "but I must decrease."

\* Jesus made a different and far more powerful impression than His forerunner. John recalled the Law, Jesus fulfilled it. John took up again and summed up the preaching of the Prophets. Jesus realized their dream. He was He that was to come and Whom they had announced, He Whose mission it was to pronounce the final judgements and grant the final deliverances. Moses, in the plains of Moab, had said to his people: "See, I have set before thee this day life and death; choose thou!" Jesus once more announced the alternatives, but He was greater than Moses: He not only showed life, but gave it. Would Israel be willing? "I am *He that liveth*" God had said to Moses in the revelation of Sinai. Jesus claimed the same attribute, when He said, "I am the Life," to which He added the words, "I am the Truth" and "I am the Way." The Semitic language prefers always to put the concrete for the abstract; translate these formulae, and you have: "I am the mediator, the *true* man, the *living* man," or quite simply, "the *Jehovist*." The *Jehovist*, that is the man who has in himself the life of Jehovah; the *true* man, that is, the man who realizes the

image of Jehovah ; the *Mediator*, that is to say, the man who leads mankind to Jehovah. The whole ministry of Jesus and its crowning sacrifice are explained by this threefold character defining the work and person of the Messiah. It explains also the astonishment, stupidity, anger and indignation encountered and provoked by Jesus wherever He went. Jesus was the *Jehovist* ; and Jerusalem, its Temple, its nobles, and its priests, and the theology spread by the synagogues among the Jewish crowd, all these were *Elohist* ; and the *Elohist* form of religion, with its gifts, rites, works, merits and vanities, kept men's consciences in the bondage of superstition and made them incapable of understanding what the Prophets had spoken.

Jesus from the outset boldly undertook to break in pieces the moulds in which the revelation of His Father had been confined and cramped as in a tomb. His first act at Jerusalem, the act of all acts which revealed the *Jehovist*, was the cleansing of the Temple,<sup>1</sup> when His whip of small cords lashed the *Elohism* which was turning the house of prayer into a den of thieves. Then, during the first months of His ministry, two discourses, preserved by John, show Him attacking the *Elohist* doctrine with its foundation of self-righteousness and racial pride, by setting against it the *Jehovist* doctrine with its condition of regeneration and its call to spiritual worship. To Nicodemus, the blameless teacher in Israel, Jesus says : "Except a man be born anew, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."<sup>2</sup> To the woman of evil life and of a race accursed in the Jews' eyes, the woman of Samaria whom He met at Jacob's well, Jesus declares : "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain<sup>3</sup> [Gerizim] nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth : . . . God is a

<sup>1</sup> *John* ii. 13-22.

<sup>2</sup> *John* iii. 5-16.

<sup>3</sup> On which the Samaritans had built a temple in the time of Nehemiah (*John* iv. 5-42).

Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

It only remained for Him to declare Himself the Lord's Anointed, the Christ announced by the Messianic Prophets. And this He did on His return to Nazareth, when the teachers of the synagogue, at the Sabbath service, asked Him to speak on the text for the day: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives."—"To-day," said Jesus, "hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."<sup>1</sup> He spoke, and explained His divine mission, but the doctors understood no more at Nazareth than they had done at Jerusalem. The message of *Jehovism* was as a sealed book to the official representatives of Jehovah. The Sadducees sneered and thought Him crazy. The Pharisees were indignant and called Him a blasphemer. Yet both parties were obliged to treat Him with respect, for the crowd clung to Him. For Jesus was not, like the Baptist, merely a preacher of *Jehovism*. By His birth He possessed the power to re-create the family of God upon earth, and sanctified by thirty years of communion with His Father and triumph over the Tempter, He went forward in the power of the Spirit and blessed the earth with a return of the spiritual virtues. Wherever He went, He turned confusion to order, tempest to calm, sickness to health, restlessness to peace and death to life. Jehovah had come back to His own creation. And the crowds, flocking from all sides, acclaimed Jesus and His words as supernatural. They did not perceive that really Jesus was the normal man, and that He had picked up the sceptre which Jehovah had given to man, and which man had let slip on the day of his fall. Jesus, in bringing back the Spirit among men, had simply restored order and replaced matter in subjection to the Spirit. Miracles here below do not belong to the realm of the Divine, in which men look for them: they are to be found in the realm of human wretchedness. The true miracle is in all the facts which show that our present humanity is only a "sub-humanity," imperfect and incomplete;

<sup>1</sup> *Luke* iv. 16; *Isaiah* lxi. 1.

and wherever the will of a child of God is conquered and destroyed by the power of darkness or the blind forces of Nature, *there* is the miracle. The miracle is not that Jesus walks on the waves, but that Simon, when Jesus calls him, sinks in them. The normal condition is the reign of God. That was why Jesus, announcing the event of Pentecost to His disciples, said: "When the Spirit is in you, ye shall do the works that I do, and even greater works shall ye do."<sup>1</sup> Did He mean by that: "I am inaugurating the age of wonders"? No, but: "I am restoring the kingdom of God."

Now the kingdom expected by the Pharisees and the writers of apocalypses was very different. And so the Messiah, seeing that He could not rely on the moral co-operation of the official clergy, chose Himself helpers from among the poor, with no authority but what He gave them. He collected them on a hill and delivered for them, in the hearing of the crowd, an address of consecration. This discourse, generally known as the Sermon on the Mount, was the charter of the Kingdom, whose builders He had just chosen. And the whole charter is contained in the words of the prayer which sums it up: "Our Father, which art in heaven, Thy will be done *in earth* as it is in heaven." When the reign of the Spirit shall have brought back the normal condition of things in the midst of God's creation, there will no longer be any earth or heaven. Heaven will be everywhere, because God will be *all in all*. Jesus' whip, which had begun by driving those who sold out of His Father's house, now drove out of His Father's religion all the trash of the traditions which encumbered and polluted it. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but *I* say unto you." Yet He makes no innovations, He fulfils the Law and the Prophets, and He sums up the whole of His revelation in the two great sentences of the *Jehovist* revelation, which are the base of eternal religion: "Thou shalt love Jehovah with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." The religion of Jesus is an act. That act springs from the spiritual regeneration

<sup>1</sup> *John* xiv. 12-17, and xvi.

of the heart. To understand this religion, a man must be conscious of sin and of the fallen state which makes the coming of a Saviour among men necessary. Now such a consciousness had vanished from the Jewish religion, with its countless burnt offerings, but its total absence of the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart. And so Jesus, instead of touching the Pharisees, offended them. With His inward worship, His spiritual law and His reign established not by force and glory, but by love and the example of a spotless life, the Galilean Messiah exasperated the doctors of Judea. They accused Him of breaking the Law when He did good on the Sabbath, of blasphemy when He called God His Father, and of driving out devils through the prince of the devils. Jesus replied: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Blind leaders of the blind! Whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones and corruption within! You who take away the key of knowledge, and have not entered in yourselves but have hindered those who would have entered! You say, We see. Therefore your sin stands. Every sin shall be forgiven. One only can never be forgiven, the sin against the Holy Ghost!"<sup>1</sup>

The healing of the man born blind<sup>2</sup> completed the moral rupture between the *Jehovist* Messiah and the *Elohist* clergy. The priests of Israel were not to be won. The religious authorities began to persecute Jesus: the most extreme party thought of making away with Him, and Jerusalem was designated as the place where He must perish. The growing unpopularity of Jesus among the governing classes had already ruined His forerunner the Baptist. Herod had with impunity cast the too stern critic into his palace prison. In the depth of his gloomy dungeon, John in his turn was dismayed by the tardiness of the Messiah's reign, of which in spite of all he too had caught a glimpse in the glowing promises of the current apocalypses. He accordingly sent two of his disciples to Jesus, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" When the question was asked, Jesus must have felt painfully solitary. John the Baptist, who had lifted the Prophetic preaching of the old

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* ix. x. xii. ; *Mark* iii. ; *Luke* xi., etc.

<sup>2</sup> *John* v.

Covenant to its highest level, had failed to enter into the spirit of the New. "He that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he,"<sup>1</sup> said Jesus: and we may apply to him in a sense the poetical image applied by Dante to Vergil: "A man walking in the night and trailing behind him a torch, which, without lighting him, shines for posterity." One thing only was left Jesus, and that was the naive enthusiasm of the Galilean crowds acclaiming in Him the friend of the poor, the comforter of the afflicted and the sovereign healer of the sick, Who everywhere, and especially among the lowly, waged a war to the death against death. After the multiplication of loaves, which brought the popular admiration to a climax, the crowd tried to take Him and make Him king.<sup>2</sup> Then, seeing the crowds advancing further and further along the pernicious path of carnal enthusiasm and determined in spite of His discourses and parables to see in Him nothing but an earthly deliverer, Jesus with His own hands tore the veil which was concealing from them the profound meaning of His coming into the world. He employed an image—the Bread of Life—but he spoke plainly and said explicitly: "Ye seek me, because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life. I am the Bread of Life, the Bread of God, which giveth life unto the world. He that feedeth on Me, shall live by Me."<sup>3</sup> This time, the people understood that it was vain to rest their carnal hopes on Jesus, and useless even to follow Him, if they did not wish to follow Him to the end, that is to say, give themselves to Him and enter into His communion by conversion.

They took offence and left Him.

It was the beginning of the downward road. But, as in the history of the kingdom of Heaven, every defeat has its accompanying victory, Jesus, at the moment of bidding farewell to popular favour, finally established His reign in the hearts of those who were really His. The sorrow of seeing the crowds disperse was wiped away by the declaration of Simon Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living

<sup>1</sup> *Luke* vii. 18-30.

<sup>2</sup> *John* vi. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *John* vi. 26.



God!”<sup>1</sup> The importance of this declaration lies above all in the fact that Jesus inspired it. No doubt His disciples had from the outset acclaimed their Master; but they had done so especially in the enthusiasm of their hopes, the Messianic hopes which they shared with the masses of the people. Jesus devoted all the first part of His ministry to showing them that those hopes were vain, and that He was not the Messiah whom Jewish ambition expected. During this initiation, the confidence of the disciples passed through terrible ordeals, in the course of which in each individual conscience the *Elohistic* conception of the Messiah had to be turned into the *Jehovist*, the temporal ideal into the spiritual, the religion of self-interest into that of self-sacrifice. It was a trial of love, in which the loyalty of the eleven was strengthened, but Judas fell. They had, amidst hesitations, fears and renunciations, to strive, like Jesus in the wilderness, against the Prince of this world. They had to win step by step the faith which they had proclaimed in the enthusiasm of the first days. Now the initiation was complete. The illusion was dispelled. The crowd clamouring for a Messiah King of the Jews was no longer there. It remained now to see whether, once the scaffolding was removed, the edifice would stand upright in all the purity of its lines and on a solid foundation. Then it was that the Master asked His disciples who remained alone with Him: “Who say ye that I am?”—and the reply came: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” There was no more to be said. The test had been successful, and Jesus did not conceal His joy. He saw already, in advance, His church founded and Satan falling from heaven like lightning. He could suffer, and die: for faithful hands had been stretched out to receive the keys of Heaven.

This scene which was enacted in the district of Caesarea Philippi, marks the turning-point in the life of the Redeemer. He was not followed now by crowds, but individual consciences gave themselves to Him. His discourses, becoming more and more intimate, began to turn especially on the necessity of His sufferings and work of Atonement. He

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xvi. 13-20; *Mark* viii. 27-29; *Luke* ix. 18-21; *John* vi. 61.

continued long to hope that the cup might pass from Him and that He might succeed in melting the hearts of His people by the warmth of His love. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"<sup>1</sup> But now the Messiah's plan was rejected. Israel had refused its mission of mediation. The mediator therefore must be He, and He alone, the Son of Man. The expiatory sufferings, from which the new Israel was to spring, He alone would endure them, He Who had not deserved them. In His own body and His own heart He would concentrate and Himself go through the whole moral crisis of humanity. He would give the world, in spite of the world's hatred, the spectacle of the normal man, a perfect son to God, and a perfect brother to his brothers. He was ready, for that object, to show, if need were, absolute obedience in absolute suffering. Nay more, to glorify His Father and win the hearts of men, He would allow Himself to be nailed to a cross. Thus indeed the "Second Isaiah" had dimly foreseen it in his vision of the Man of Sorrows. Jesus would fulfil the prophecy. From that moment, He began to give those who tremblingly followed Him, not as before the triumphant forecast of the kingdom, the vision foreshadowed in the beatitudes, but that of the *via dolorosa*, of possession through renunciation, of victory through defeat, of the crown through the cross. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."<sup>2</sup> The opposition increased. While the Master, becoming more and more averse to external display, wrapped Himself up in the enigmatical title of "Son of Man" and forbade His disciples to tell the crowd that He was the Christ,<sup>3</sup> His followers and even His own brothers grew more and more disconcerted, impatient, and angry. The incredulous people would no longer be held in suspense. "Manifest thyself plainly," said they, "or else keep silence."<sup>4</sup> Jesus understood, and He was ready to obey. Having no desire to fall a victim to sudden violence

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 24-28; John xix. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xvi. 20, xvii. 9; Luke ix. 36.

<sup>4</sup> John vii. 4, x. 24.

and perish obscurely, He crossed the Jordan<sup>1</sup> into heathen territory. There, in Peraea, He pronounced the great parables of universalism, those contained in *Luke* xv., in which the prodigal son represented humanity sunk in the darkness of error and corruption, and showed that by repentance that despised humanity could find a place closer to the Father's heart than the chosen people, the selfish and disdainful eldest son. Repentance, love and the cry for mercy, these were the only things of any value in the eyes of Jesus, and the only conditions of entry into the new kingdom. If the Roman publican accepted them, he would return home "justified"; and if the Jewish Pharisee rejected them, he was "rejecting for himself the counsel of God."<sup>2</sup> A sudden occurrence, the death of a friend of Jesus, Lazarus of Bethany, precipitated events. While Lazarus lay on his death-bed, his sisters Martha and Mary sent a despairing appeal to the great Healer. Jesus resolved to go. The road to Jerusalem was the road to death. The disciples knew it, and strove to turn Him from His purpose, but failed. Then Thomas, in despair, cried out, "Let us also go thither that we may die with Him!" Thomas' presentiment proved true. After the raising of Lazarus performed by Jesus with the most unaccustomed publicity, compromise was out of the question. Either the Messiah must be recognized, or the world rid of an impostor. The honour of Jehovah and the interests of Jerusalem and of the State made it imperative to take some decision.<sup>3</sup> And the Sanhedrin decided to put Jesus to death.

There is no need in this place to recount the events of the last week of the Redeemer's life. Its striking incidents, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Judas' betrayal, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the agony in Gethsemane, the arrest, Peter's denial, the condemnation by the Sanhedrin, Christ's sufferings in the palace and on the road to Calvary, all these fill in the memories of men a place from which the foes of the faith and the disloyalties of the Church have not been able to uproot them. Let us notice here just one act in the drama, the condemnation by the Sanhedrin. The discussion

<sup>1</sup> *John* x. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke* vii. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *John* xi. 47-53.

before the High Court of Jewish *Elohism* not reaching any conclusive result, the High Priest, to end the matter, rose and solemnly put to Jesus the final and supreme question: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus replied: "Thou hast said. . . ." Then the High Priest rent his garments, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold now ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?" They answered and said, "He is worthy of death." Then did they spit in His face and buffet Him: and some smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying: "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?"<sup>1</sup> If we rightly grasp the import of that scene, then Iscariot's betrayal, the crowd's cries of "Crucify him!" Pilate's cowardice, and the death inflicted on their thorn-crowned victim by the Roman legionaries, all these recede into the background. Jesus was arrested, condemned, martyred, murdered by the official representatives of the religion of Jehovah. It was to no purpose that Jesus had during three years preached *Jehovism* and displayed all the virtues of that creed in His life. It was to no purpose that He had in His person realized the character of the Messiah and undergone all the sufferings which the "Second Isaiah" had foretold. He was crucified for saying that He was what He had proved that He was—the MESSIAH.

Where could we find more cogent proof of the irremediable ravages of *Elohism* in the heart of God's people? By destroying in the Jewish soul the Prophetic conception of sin, it had destroyed the very soul itself. In the tragic mystery of the mission of Jesus, everything becomes clear, from the astonishment of the learned Nicodemus to the fanaticism of the youthful Saul. The Messiah promised, longed for and announced by the Prophets, "came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. . . ." How should they have received Him? They had no longer any need of a Saviour. From the first days of His ministry, Jesus had anticipated the fatal error, when He had said to the Jews after the healing of the cripple at Bethesda: "Ye search the

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xxvi. 19-68. Cf. *John* xviii. 22.

scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life ; and these are they which bear witness of me : and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life. . . .<sup>1</sup> Think not that I will accuse you to the Father : there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope.”<sup>2</sup> St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans is at pains to dispel the same illusion when he says, speaking of his countrymen : “ I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.”<sup>3</sup> These two statements of the Master and the disciple make quite clear the error and the sin which ruined the chosen people. The pride of the Jews was the reef on which the revelation, the exhortations and the example of the Messiah were all dashed to pieces. The Jew who worshipped *Elohim*, who had his God for his protector and his observance of the law imputed to him as a virtue, considered himself to be whole, and that was why Jesus excluded him by the words : “ They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”<sup>4</sup> The *Elohist*, who did not believe in the Fall so far as he was concerned, thought he understood perfectly clearly the Law of Jehovah and fulfilled that Law to God’s satisfaction. And so Jesus, when the Pharisees asked Him, “ Are we also blind ? ” excluded them with these words : “ If ye were blind, ye would have no sin ; but now ye say, We see : your sin remaineth.”<sup>5</sup> The *Elohist*, rejecting the scheme of the *Jehovism* of the Prophets, consisting of repentance, conversion and the bearing of Jehovah’s salvation to the ends of the earth,<sup>6</sup> refused to come to the baptism of John. Jesus therefore excluded him with this terrible sentence bearing alike on the individual salvation of the Jew and on the duty of being the light of the Gentiles which Israel had received from divine Providence : “ The Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him [John].”<sup>7</sup>

“ It is expedient that one man should die for the people,”

<sup>1</sup> John v. 39.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. x. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. ix. 12.

<sup>5</sup> John ix. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah xlix. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Luke vii. 30.

said the high priest Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin. And the Jews, hoping thus to save their nation, had raised the cross of the Messiah. But instead of saving itself by that act, Israel had signed its own death-warrant. It had rejected the counsel of God for itself. Jesus did not wait for the crime to be perpetrated to pronounce His nation's funeral oration. As He was drawing near Jerusalem, seeing the glorious city unroll its splendour before His eyes, He wept over it and exclaimed: "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."<sup>1</sup> Two days later, He summed up the whole of God's work in a parable in which history and prophecy stand out with equal clearness: "A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country for a long time. And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him and sent him away empty. And he sent yet another servant, and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded, and cast him forth. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir: let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. And they cast him forth out of the vineyard and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others."<sup>2</sup> On the following day, two days before His death, His indignation against the worthless shepherds of His people broke out in curses which fulfil the threats of Ezekiel and the sombre predictions of Moses in his farewell address: "Woe

<sup>1</sup> *Luke* xix. 42-44.<sup>2</sup> *Luke* xx. 9.

unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgement of hell ? Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes : some of them shall ye kill and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city ; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her ! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. . . . See ye to it !”<sup>1</sup> As Jesus was going away from the Temple, His disciples drew near to show Him the buildings. But he answered, “ See ye not all these things ? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. . . .”<sup>2</sup> But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. . . .<sup>3</sup> And not a hair of your head shall perish. In your patience ye shall win your souls. But when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains ; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out ; and let not them that are in the country enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days ! for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people. And they shall

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* xxiii. 29-39. The words “ see ye to it ” are added in order to make the sense of the preceding sentence clearer.

<sup>2</sup> *Matt.* xxiv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Matt.* xxiv. 13.

fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Dies irae dies illa  
Solvat saeculum in favilla !

Prophecies like these cast a tragic light on some of the words uttered at the time of Jesus' condemnation. When the priests, among the mob at the palace, howled : " We have no king but Caesar ! " <sup>2</sup> they intended to lie so as to intimidate Pilate into sentencing Jesus to death. But they were speaking the truth : and by their blasphemy they were sealing their own abdication as a nation. They were crucifying their last king. When Pilate, seeing that he prevailed nothing, washed his hands before the people and said, " I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man : see ye to it ! " all the people answered and said, " His blood be on us and on our children ! " <sup>3</sup> Jesus, who was standing there, with His crown of thorns and scarlet robe, heard the fatal imprecation. And so, when on the way to Calvary He saw Jewish women shedding tears of pity for His sufferings, the Messiah, in a transport of prophetic compassion exclaimed, " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us. " <sup>4</sup> We may wonder what are the feelings of sincere Israelites reading these words to-day, after nineteen centuries of still-continued misfortunes have given them a sinister fulfilment. Not only the threats but also the promises of Jesus have been fulfilled : " Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone ; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. " <sup>5</sup> " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. " <sup>6</sup> " I am the bread of life. . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. . . . He that eateth me, he also shall

<sup>1</sup> *Luke* xxi. 18-24.

<sup>2</sup> *John* xix. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Matt.* xxvii. 24, 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Luke* xxiii. 28. Cf. *Hos.* x. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *John* xii. 24.

<sup>6</sup> *John* xii. 32.



live because of me.”<sup>1</sup> How well the Prophets were fulfilled by that Jesus Who, to conquer death, was “obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”<sup>2</sup>

But note the strange reversal! That death, by the very fact that it expressed and, if one may say so, was the climax of Jesus’ holiness, compassion and filial obedience, was therefore the expression and culmination of His power of Life. The virtues which He required to die and the reasons for which He died made the hour of Calvary the most living hour of Christ’s life here on earth. In the moment when the mysterious expiation demanded the hanging of a victim on the cross, the words of the Prophet proved their triumphant truth: “Thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.”<sup>3</sup> Why be surprised at that glorious Easter-dawn? Christ, by dying, had destroyed all the causes of death. And it was for us that He destroyed them. Jesus died as the Messiah and the Mediator. As He had said in the days of His lowliness, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,”<sup>4</sup> I can picture Him saying in heaven, on the day of His return to glory, “He that hath seen me hath seen my brethren.” Already, before leaving His disciples, He prayed: “Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that, where I am, they may also be with me.”<sup>5</sup> And His prayer was answered. His death was followed by His resurrection: “If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain.” His resurrection bore its fruit at Pentecost: “Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you.” And Pentecost, by filling the disciples with the living Spirit of their Master, gave back to the world a normal humanity, living as the children of God and the brothers of all men, the family of Jehovah, the living servants of the living God.

All is finished. The seed of the woman has bruised the head of the serpent, and the cycle of Revelation is closed. The events of the *Gospel* had their sequel in the *Acts*. Henceforward, history shows us among those who live in Jesus Christ all the heroic acts of a new world entering upon life, and among those who put Him to death all the

<sup>1</sup> *John* vi. 48-58.

<sup>2</sup> *Phil.* ii. 8; *Isaiah* liii.

<sup>3</sup> *Psa.* xvi. 10.

<sup>4</sup> *John* xiv. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *John* xvii. 21-24.

convulsions of a world falling into decay. The new-born world we see in St. Paul going through the capitals of the West to entrust to Aryans the spiritual treasure refused by the Semites. Thus had Jesus said, "The lord of the vineyard will destroy these husbandmen and will give the vineyard unto others." In vain his Jewish countrymen hung on the heels of the Apostle of the Gentiles, hunted him down like a wild beast, had him thrown into prison and delivered him over to Nero's executioners. Idle fury! The blood of the first martyrs was the seed of true worshippers of Jehovah, and the insignificant group of men and women driven out of the synagogue started the movement out of which our modern world has sprung. The decaying world was Judaism, whose rival parties, reconciled for a day by the death of the Messiah, began again on the morrow to tear one another. The old parties, which had had their days of greatness and glory, were succeeded by factions, whose animosities still survived all their misfortunes. One followed Hillel, the peacemaker, from whom Jesus had learned the sublime rule: "Do not to others what thou wouldst not have done to thyself." This was the group of moderate zealots. Another claimed to represent the views of Shammai, the unbending doctor, the impetuous patriot, to whom every dealing with Rome was an infamous act of treason. This was the group of radical zealots. Each of these factions accused the other of guiding Zion to its ruin. They fought each other, whenever danger did not compel them to fight against the common enemy. True, the latter gave them but little respite. The Roman governors, exasperated by the Jews' dissensions and in a hurry to enrich themselves at the expense of Rome's vassals, incessantly rekindled by their brutality and exactions the political fanaticism of the people. Then followed summary executions, after the fashion set by Pilate, who settled disputes by mingling the blood of the zealots with that of their sacrifices.<sup>1</sup> Caligula's attempt to re-impose the rule of the Herods on Judaea met with no success. Agrippa, after barely three years' reign, was poisoned (41-44 A.D.). Then the Roman procurators re-appeared: Cuspius Fadus (44-45

<sup>1</sup> *Luke* xiii. 1.

A.D.), who subdued the revolt excited by the false Messiah Theudas; Tiberius Alexander (45-48 A.D.); Ventidius Cumanus (48-52 A.D.); Claudius Felix (52-60 A.D.), whose wife Drusilla<sup>1</sup> was the sister of Herod Agrippa II., whom Nero had made king of the territory beyond Jordan and a part of Galilee; Porcius Festus (61-62 A.D.), who made St. Paul appear before Agrippa in his palace at Caesarea;<sup>2</sup> and Albinus (62-64), before whose arrival the High Priest at Jerusalem caused James, the brother of Jesus, to be stoned. It was at that moment that Paul, a prisoner, had just started for Rome.

Did Albinus' successor, Gessius Florus, outdo the vexatious government of his predecessors? Did he, having come to the end of his resources, himself encourage insurrection so as to cover his excesses? Historians are divided on the point. But sure it is that the hour of the final chastisement had struck. In 66 A.D. a general rising, long prepared by zealots and Messianic wonder-workers, broke out, first in the capital and then over the whole country. The surprise of the Romans gave the insurgents time to organize their resistance. But the odds against them were too heavy, and Rome was resolved this time to destroy for ever this hot-bed of discord. Vespasian began operations vigorously. His army swept the country-side. The towns, villages and entrenched camps even of the mountainous country yielded each in turn to the disciplined legions of Rome, till in 70 A.D. Titus, the son of Vespasian, sat down before the walls of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> The city, with its triple belt of walls bristling with towers of gigantic strength and bound together with marvellous skill, rose aloft on its double-crested hill, like an impregnable fortress. It was the middle of the Passover. Close on three millions of men had crowded into Jerusalem or around its walls. Enormous provisions of corn heaped up under the arches of viaducts guaranteed the continuance of the food-supply. Titus with his seventy thousand men would certainly have failed in his enterprise. But what the Roman eagles

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxiv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxv. 22.

<sup>3</sup> The account which follows is a summary of chapters 6 to 8 of Josephus' *Jewish War*, Book vii.

could not have done, was accomplished by the fury of rival factions. Even before the arrival of the besiegers, the city was at the mercy of three parties: the zealots, led by John of Giscala, held the tower Antonia and the outer circle of the Temple; others, with Eleazar, had entrenched themselves in the court of the Jews and in the Temple itself. The upper city was held by a party of ten thousand under the command of the roughest soldier in Jerusalem, Simon of Gerasa. The people, terrorized by these fratricidal conflicts and falling under the suspicion of the three parties, was victimized by all three. The streets were already running with blood, the stores had been burnt and famine was setting in, when Titus planted his catapults before the walls. In the face of the imminent peril, the troops of Eleazar and John combined. But Simon and his followers would not join them except only for the purpose of fighting the Romans. Right on to the end of the siege, they kept up in Jerusalem the horrors of civil war. When the Romans, completing their massacres in the burning ruins, penetrated into the subterranean dungeons where putrefying corpses lay in heaps, they found and dragged out miserable wretches whom Simon and John had kept there in irons to the bitter end.

On the 31st of March, 70 A.D., the first belt of walls was taken, after fifteen days' siege, and five days later, the second fell. From that moment, the struggle was indescribable. Every form of cruelty and suffering, of heroism and fanaticism, seemed to have met together to make an end of the ill-starred city, swept along to its fall by an infuriated enemy and the frenzy of internal discord. All those who tried to flee from famine and the excesses of Simon's soldiery were crucified under the walls of Zion, but before long the Romans had to desist, for want of space and of wood for crosses. The besiegers heard that some fugitives had swallowed a few gold coins to save them from the pillage. The Syrian and Arabian troops in Titus' pay set out in pursuit and ripped open two thousand of them. But the most miserable of all were those who were still behind the city walls. Streets, squares and houses were littered with corpses. Tortured by hunger and thirst, the wretches dragged themselves with

groans along the walls, no longer attempting to dispute their last belongings with the combatants, and tore one another to pieces to steal some broken bit of putrid food. Most of those who fell never rose again. Plague and madness were rife. And still the rival bands went on cutting throats for the sake of plunder. The Roman tide was rising. One Jewess, in delirium, tore the babe she was suckling from her breast: "What use is it to me, she cried, to give you up to this triple scourge—war, famine and the fury of factions?" She killed it, dressed it, devoured half and offered the rest to Simon's ruffians who came to complete their plunder, saying to them, "It is my child! eat it! that is what I have done!" The horror of monstrous acts like this appalled both Jews and Romans alike. Titus made a supreme effort to induce the city to surrender. But both John and Simon were immovable. "We prefer death," said they, "to slavery. Besides, we laugh at your threats, for He who dwells in the Temple will not suffer it to fall. The issue rests with God." The Roman general then, to have done with it, had recourse to fire. The fort Antonia had been carried by surprise. The porches were set on fire, and by degrees the flames reached the Temple precincts. On the 8th of July, a Roman soldier, against the orders of Titus, set fire to the sanctuary, and before long the whole hill of Zion was a blazing furnace. The looked-for miracle did not come. Jehovah was deserting His courts. Nothing was left the zealots but to sell their lives dearly. The carnage was horrible. Corpses were heaped up to serve as ramparts: at times the flames were even quenched by the streams of blood. While the legionaries, drunk with the pillage, sacrificed to their eagles, the priests were seen on the top of the Temple roof wrenching off the golden spikes which covered it and hurling them with their lead fastenings on the heads of the Romans; and then, as the whole building collapsed in the flames, they threw themselves into the fire to perish with their Temple.

*Sic transit gloria.*

Titus, now at last in possession of the towers, exclaimed at the sight of those formidable defence-works, "We have fought with the gods on our side! Only a god can have

driven the Jews from works like these! What could the hand of man and the power of siege-engines have done against such towers?" When the fire was extinguished, the Romans completed the massacre of the Jews who had gone to earth under the walls: then they destroyed the town and demolished the ramparts. More than a million Jews had perished during the siege. After the catastrophe, the prisoners, more than a hundred thousand in number, were sold, despatched to the mines or distributed among the provinces, to be thrown to the wild beasts. John and Simon, who had hidden underground, were forced out by famine, and surrendered at discretion. Simon was reserved to grace the victor's triumph (71 A.D.), and John condemned to imprisonment for life. A few zealots had cut their way out and had shut themselves up in the fort of Massada, south of the Dead Sea, under the command of Eleazar, son of Jair. The Romans pursued them there. Seeing that assistance was vain and being reduced to the last extremity, the dauntless men resolved to compel the admiration of their tormentors by their desperation. Instead of falling upon the Romans, they destroyed all their possessions. Then they slew their own wives and children, and finally ten of them were selected by lot to kill the rest. When these had with marvellous coolness performed their appalling task, they drew lots to see which of the ten should kill his nine companions; and when this one was left all alone, he set fire to the fort and fell on his sword.<sup>1</sup> Judaea was turned into a desert. The emperor sold its lands in lots, and silence reigned over the ruins of Jerusalem, where only a small Roman garrison was left in possession.

Thus closed the history of the chosen people, that everlasting puzzle to all who meditate on the glory and decay of nations, and who will look in vain for any other to compare with Israel for the splendour of its privileges and the horror of its reverses. Surely, Israel lacked neither racial vigour, nor genius, nor superior morality, nor contempt of death, nor the

<sup>1</sup> This terrible episode had cost 960 lives. It would have remained unknown for ever, had not an old woman and five children hidden in an aqueduct to escape massacre. Cf. Josephus, *Jewish War*, Book vii. ch. 9.

power in an extraordinary degree of making sacrifices for its faith. But it lacked the one thing for which Jehovah, Who has for ever joined life to love and love to life, had chosen it, protected it and encouraged it through all its vicissitudes. It had never given its heart to Jehovah. Israel, while overflowing with hate for Jehovah's enemies, did not love Jehovah Himself. Israel had sought to please Jehovah by the splendour of its worship, the "righteousness" of its acts, the fervour of its faith and the valour of its arms. Its pride for ever prevented it from answering the divine appeal: "My son, give me thy heart!" Moses promulgated the law of love, but was never understood. The Prophets summoned Israel to love Jehovah under pain of death, and they were persecuted. The Messiah in His life displayed the divine power of love, and He was crucified. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. . . . Love never faileth. . . . But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."<sup>1</sup> Israel knew all those gifts and all those virtues, save only love. And that was why the ardour of the Jewish conscience, which might in the consuming fire of love have given the world the creative principle of a new humanity, did in fact, without love, culminate only in the fever of delirium, bringing madness and death in its train.

Jerusalem fell without surrendering. Rome, who crushed her, was one day herself to meet a more inglorious end. The traveller who seeks in her ruins to evoke her vanished splendour, sees still standing, near the Colosseum, the Triumphal Arch of Titus. On that arch, among the defaced bas-reliefs, one remains still recognizable, the seven-branched candlestick of the Temple of Jerusalem. Snatched from the flames and then sculptured there as if to immortalize

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1-13.

the most heartrending of catastrophes, this emblem, set there on that ruin, seems to us to possess a deeper meaning. It tells us that if the Rome of the Caesars, in its decline, was able to conquer Jerusalem, it was because, in the religion to which God had entrusted the universal seed of life, Aaron had prevailed over Moses, Solomon over David, the priest over the Prophet and Elohim over Jehovah.



## APPENDIX I.

### MOSES AND HAMMURABI.

Delitzsch would maintain (*Babel und Bibel*) that all the laws of Moses, including the Decalogue, existed at Babylon long before his time. But, as Dr. J. Jeremias points out (*Moses und Hammurabi*, 1903):

(1) If Hammurabi was able about 2250 B.C. to frame a code of laws, there is no *a priori* impossibility in the framing of a code by Moses so much later as the 14th century B.C.

(2) The similarity of the two codes would lead us to suppose that the common law of the ancient Arabians may show traces of a common Arabian source to which both Hammurabi and Moses were equally indebted.

We cannot do better than summarize on this subject the argument of *The Independent* for January, 1903, as follows:

That Moses was not the originator of the greater part of the legislation of the Pentateuch is generally admitted by Biblical scholars of all shades of opinion. Such laws may have been developed in Egypt, Babylon, or Syria, wherever civilization existed before the age of Hammurabi and Moses. But it does not follow that all the Mosaic laws existed long before the time of the great Hebrew lawgiver. Some of them, such as the law of Retaliation, "eye for eye," or those for the protection of the family hearth, must have been in force everywhere. But on a comparison of the Babylonian with the Mosaic code, the differences are obvious.

For instance, the more elaborate code of Hammurabi knows nothing of the Sabbath, or of organized courts of law, or of laws against corruption, magic, or false weights, such as we find in the code of Moses. The law of incest is terribly lax. There are no penalties for unnatural crimes or prostitution. There are no sanitary laws. In what respect does Hammurabi's code appear to Delitzsch to be superior? It rests, generally, on the idea of justice, but the undercurrent of mercy, which we detect in Moses' code, is conspicuous by its absence. Moses forbids the oppression of foreigners, provides for their naturalization, prohibits usury, and orders the creditor to give back before sunset the debtor's coat he has taken in pledge. He forbids gleanings on the harvested field so that the poor may pick up a few ears to eat. The harvest of the seventh (Sabbatical) year is devoted to the needy. Land sold for a debt returns to the owner's family in the year of jubilee. Cities of refuge are open to those who have accidentally caused the death of a man. Judges require the evidence of two witnesses before they can convict, and cannot inflict more than forty stripes. Runaway slaves are not to be given up, and cruelty to animals also is condemned.

There is nothing at all resembling this in the Babylonian code. Nor is there any proof forthcoming of the Babylonian origin of the Decalogue. There are resemblances but also a fundamental difference.

Those who, with Delitzsch, would maintain that the Hebrews borrowed the bulk of their laws from Babylon, should bear in mind that Babylon ruled over Palestine and Syria from 3500 B.C. to about 1600 B.C. At the latter period, the 18th Egyptian dynasty extended its sway to the Euphrates, and retained its hold for several centuries. Even before that date the Mediterranean world had much more constant commercial relations with Egypt than with Babylon. So that the laws in use at the time of the Hebrew invasion of Palestine must, together with religion and art, have been subject to Egyptian influence.

The distinguishing mark of the Mosaic writings is Monotheism. It was inevitable that the Only God should be regarded as a *national* God, in an age when Polytheism was rife in all the countries surrounding Israel. But it is a grave error to assign a Babylonian origin to this exclusive nationalism. The Babylonians equally readily adopted foreign gods or carried their own abroad. The gods of Babylon were no more national than those of Egypt or Phœnicia.

The conjectures of Delitzsch add nothing to the Biblical account of the origin of the religion of Jehovah.

In conclusion, there is much material common to the literatures of Babylon and of the Old Testament, but the spirit of the Old Testament is infinitely superior to that of Babylon.

## APPENDIX II.

### SEER, PROPHET AND NAZIR.

The word *roeh* "seer" fell into disuse after Samuel's reforms and was replaced by *nabhi* "prophet." The root-meaning of the verb from which this latter word is derived is significant. *Naba* means "to be in a state of ebullition." It is used of the first great servants of God, the Patriarchs (e.g. *Gen.* xx. 7 ; *Ps.* cv. 15), and of Moses, the founder of *Jehovism* (see *Exod.* iii. ; *Num.* xii. ; *Deut.* xviii. 6-22, xxxiv. 10-12). It is found occasionally in reference to the fanatical preachers of Canaanite and Phœnician deities (Baal, Astarte, etc., 1 *Kings* xviii. 19, 40 ; 2 *Kings* x. 19), and the political agitators who falsely claimed prophetic inspiration (*Is.* ix. 14 ; *Jerem.* vi. 13, xxvi. 7, 8, 11, 16, xxviii. 1 ; *Ezek.* xiii. 2 ; *Hos.* iv. 5, xi. 7, 8, etc.).

Properly the word *nabhi* expresses, in the language of the Bible, the vocation of the men set apart by God to lead Israel in the way of redemption. The spirit of Jehovah acted upon them through dreams and visions (*Num.* xii. 6) or by causing in them an extraordinary religious enthusiasm, under which supernatural inspiration they became the instruments and witnesses of Jehovah's will. Thus the *prophet* is called a man "that hath the spirit" (*Hos.* ix. 7). It would, however, be a great mistake to render *yish ha ruach* by the Christian term "spiritual man." In the *ἄνθρωπος πνευματικός* of the New Covenant, the Spirit has become the man's second nature, whereas to the *prophet* the Spirit never ceases to be a *donum superadditum*, a something external and extraordinary which takes possession of him and uplifts him, independently of his will and sometimes even against it.

In order to convince ourselves that the *Spirit* does not come from the man, and does not belong to him personally, and that the Spirit of Jehovah, which carried off Elijah (1 *Kings* xviii. 12; 2 *Kings* ii. 16) and Ezekiel (*Ezek.* iii. 14, xi. 24) is the same Spirit which inspired the Prophets and took possession of the men of God, we need only consider how the Old Testament describes its relations with its possessors; e.g. the Spirit "*comes mightily upon them*" (*Judges* xiv. 6, 19, xv. 14; 1 *Sam.* x. 6, 10, xi. 6, xvi. 13, xviii. 10, xix. 20). They are *clothed* with the Spirit of Jehovah (*Judges* vi. 34; 1 *Chron.* xii. 18; 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20). They are *filled* with the Spirit of God (*Exod.* xxxi. 3, xxxv. 31; *Mic.* iii. 8). The Spirit of the Lord *rests* upon them (*Num.* xi. 25; 2 *Kings* ii. 15; *Is.* xi. 2). The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon them (*Num.* xxiv. 2; *Judges* iii. 10; 1 *Sam.* xix. 9; 2 *Kings* ii. 9; *Is.* lxi. 1). God *imparts* this Spirit (cf. *Num.* xi. 17; *Is.* lxiii. 11; *Is.* xlii. 2; *Ezek.* xxxvi. 27, xxxviii. 14; *Joel* iii. 1; *Zech.* xii. 10, etc.).

The Old Testament represents this *Spirit* as an active power, granted to the Prophet for a definite purpose, and definite occasion; and there is no evidence that the servant of Jehovah retained the *Spirit* longer than the circumstances required. Having delivered his message the *nabhi* becomes himself again and returns to his own life. However, it would be inaccurate and unfair to view the Prophets as passive instruments. Fed on the thought of Jehovah, and eaten up by zeal for His house, they bear aloft the torch of Truth, brandishing it high above the heads of the crowd, to make them raise their eyes, and passing it on from hand to hand, with an announcement of the day when the light will shine over all the world and the Spirit of Jehovah be poured out upon all flesh (*Joel* ii. 28). The Prophet was a forerunner. Cf. Westphal, *Chair et Esprit*, 1885, p. 82.

For the curious customs of the communities of *seers*—in which pupils were called *sons*, and teachers *men of God* (1 *Sam.* xix. 20; 1 *Kings* xx. 35; 2 *Kings* iv. 1, 38-41, vi. 1, ix. 20)—read 1 *Sam.* x. 5-13, xix. 18-24.

The language of the *nabhi*, when inspired, was generally clothed in poetry and rhythm, e.g. the oracle of Balaam, the song of Deborah, and the blessing of Jacob, which furnished a model subsequently adopted and perfected by the Prophets and Psalmists. Surprise at the musical dances and language of the *nabhi* argues ignorance of Oriental customs and of the fact that music and poetry both had their origin in alternate exclamations combined with rhythmical bodily motions. The dance and song were inseparable (*Exod.* xv. 20; *Judges* ix. 27, xxi. 21; 1 *Sam.* xviii. 6; *Jerem.* xxxi. 1; *Luke* xv. 25). In the East they may be seen in constant combination to this day. This Oriental method of alternate rhythmical recitative gave birth to the parallelism of Hebrew poetry (e.g. *Ps.* cxviii.). Cf. the strophe and antistrophe of Greek lyrics. The work of the *seers* at an early date influenced Hellenic literature through the Phoenicians (cf. Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée*, 1903). The fact that the earliest choruses in Greek lyrical contests were composed of Phoenicians, together with other evidence brought out by a critical study of Pindar, would tend to show that the choral lyrics of Greek poetry had their rise not only in the Bacchic enthusiasm of Aryans but also in the raptures of the early *seers* of the Semites. (Cf. D. Müller, *Die Propheten in ihrer ursprünglichen Form*, Vienna, 1896. Dieulafoy, *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions*, 1895, p. 245.)

Samson and Samuel are the only two examples of a *nazir* (nazirite) mentioned

in the ancient history of Israel. We cannot estimate the original character of *nazirite* vows from the regulations of *Num.* vi., which is permeated with Levitism. The details supplied by *Judges* xiii. xiv. xvi., 1 *Sam.* i. and xv. and 2 *Kings* x. 15 (Rechabites), *Jerem.* xxxv. 2, give us much more exact information on the origin and real nature of this national institution. It appears to have been the earliest form of the *Jehovist* reaction against the moral and religious infidelity of the Israelites. With his flowing hair and long beard, his avoidance of a sedentary life, his contempt for the refinements of civilization, his horror of fermented liquor and anything which could induce the unhealthy state of Bacchic excitement, the *nazir*, also called *kadesh* (consecrated), was the authentic representative of the primitive manners of *Jehovism*. He sighed for the fervent past when the wandering Hebrew lived from hand to mouth, like Abraham and Moses, relying not on human industry but on the faithfulness of God. His was a ceaseless reaction against the dissolute habits dragging Israel more and more into luxury, idolatry, fatal alliances and foreign influences. There is a close relationship between the *nazir* and the *prophet*. See *Amos* ii. 11:

I raised up of your sons for prophets,  
And of your young men for Nazirites.

The father of the Prophets arose in a *Nazirite* environment (1 *Sam.* i. 11).

## APPENDIX III.

### THE PSALMS.

Although all the psalms bearing David's name cannot be ascribed with certainty to him, it is beyond question that he shone in the front rank of the religious and inspired poets of Israel. Granted that the five groups composing our present collection of Psalms were brought together after the Jewish restoration (from 444 to 140 B.C.) for use as the hymnal of the second Temple, we must admit that the text of this collection has shared the fortunes of all such collections, that is to say, it has been touched up and enlarged to adapt it to the requirements of public worship and of the changing national circumstances. Among the latter were the sorrows of exile, the ruin of Jerusalem and the joy of restoration. We must therefore consider well before denying to David the authorship of a psalm which the Synagogue ascribes to him. Psalm li. mentions the rebuilding of the walls of Zion. Some critics would therefore deny that it was written by David. But may not the two verses about the walls of Zion be a later addition to a Psalm otherwise entirely his?

Of the 150 Psalms, 73 are ascribed to David. The following seem to be certainly his:

Before his accession : xxxiv. lix. lvi. lii. liv. lvii. cxlii.

After his accession : ci. xxiv. cx. ii.

During his great wars : xx. lx. xxi. ix. x. xviii. (cf. 2 *Sam.* xxii.).

After his sin : li. xxxii.

During Absalom's revolt : iv. vi. xi. xii. xiii. xiv. xvii. xxxviii. lv. lviii. vii. i. lxiii. xxiii. xxxv.

After his restoration : xli. xxii. xxvii. lxviii. ciii. (touched up after the return from Babylon).

Others, e.g. viii. xv. xix. xxix., contain nothing against a Davidic authorship, but we do not know the circumstances of their composition.

## APPENDIX IV.

### THE HIGH PLACES AND THE TEMPLE.

The theology which enforced the single sanctuary and the Levitical priesthood is not earlier than the composition of *Deuteronomy*, i.e. the reign of Hezekiah. It gained influence only in the closing years of the monarchy under Josiah. Till that time the plurality of places of worship, the freedom of sacrifice, and universal priesthood are proved by the whole of Hebrew history ; e.g. there is David, who sacrificed at Hebron and Bethlehem and built an altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (1 *Sam.* xx. 6, 29 ; 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 18 ; 2 *Sam.* v. 3, xv. 7), and Solomon, who went to Gibeon to offer splendid burnt offerings, "for that was the great high place" (1 *Kings* iii. 4). All these sanctuaries and all those rendered holy by the residence of Patriarchs or the blessings of the age of the conquest, could not suddenly lose all their sanctity because it had pleased a king of Oriental ways of life to build himself a temple adjoining his palace. If he had tried to force Gad, Ephraim or Dan to give up their ancient pilgrimages and local shrines, and go up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice, such a step would have wounded their pride, roused their fanaticism and hastened the disruption more certainly than the levying of taxes. In fact, the building of the Temple introduced no change in the religious practices of the day. So far is this true that in the prayer of dedication put into Solomon's mouth by the final editor, there is no hint that henceforward the sanctuary of Jerusalem is to be the only lawful sanctuary. The dedicator merely prays for the favour of Jehovah on those who pray with their faces towards the Temple ; that is all (1 *Kings* viii.). The same historian, collating the accounts of the exploits of Elijah and Elisha, represents them as practising a form of worship which has nothing to do with the Temple of Jerusalem or the idea of a single sanctuary, and which nevertheless is a restoration of the purest form of *Jehovism* (1 *Kings* xix. 10, 14). The altar over which Jehovah appeared to Amos was not at Jerusalem (*Amos* ix. 1). Elijah's famous sacrifice was offered up on Mount Carmel (1 *Kings* xviii.). Alternating with the accounts in *Kings* of the miracles done by the Prophets of the Northern Kingdom, we find continually the reproach "but the high places were not taken away" (e.g. 1 *Kings* xv. 14 ; 2 *Kings* xii. 3), which the historian repeats without suspecting in his admiration for the heroes of *Jehovism* that his accounts of the Kingdom of Israel absolutely contradict his own conception of history.

## APPENDIX V.

## THE SECOND ISAIAH.

The following are the principal reasons for denying to (the first) Isaiah chapters xl.-lxvi., which have been added to his book by the scribes :

(a) These chapters presuppose contemporary knowledge of a state of things a century later than Isaiah. That state of things again involves antecedent events of the highest importance about which the author of xl.-lxvi. says never a word.

e.g. The Fall of Assyria.  
The Chaldaean Victories.  
The Fall of Jerusalem.  
The Captivity in Babylon.

(b) Prophecies and omissions alike so prodigious would not have been understood, and would have compromised the whole of his work. Prophecy for prophecy's sake is not the Prophet's true function. Jeremiah (xxviii.) held it a sign of the false prophets that they announced the new dawn when Jehovah ordered chastisements to be announced.

(c) We must bear in mind that in Isaiah's time Babylon and Judah were allied and had common interests.

(d) To ascribe chapters *Is.* xl.-lxvi. to Isaiah (the first) is to detract greatly from the value of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For in that case, while knowing Isaiah's prophecies, they would themselves have prophesied only half of what they had read.

(e) Lastly, *Jer.* xxvi. tells us that, Jeremiah having prophesied the fall of Jerusalem, the nobles impeached him. His defenders appealed to the precedent of Micaiah. But if the chapters *Is.* xl.-lxvi. had been in existence, would Jeremiah have shocked his hearers, and would his protectors have needed the precedent of Micaiah?

These and other reasons have confirmed the suspicions already put forward in the Middle Ages by the learned Rabbi Aben Ezra, on the subject of the homogeneity of the *Book of Isaiah*.

## APPENDIX VI.

## THE PRIESTLY CODE.

*A. Ceremonial Law.*

We are satisfied that the Priestly Code was unknown to the Writer-Prophets.

True, the pre-exilic Prophets frequently allude to the performance of worship in their time, and therefore mention assemblies, priests, sacrifices and ancient religious customs. But was the worship alluded to that of the Priestly Code? Does it accord with the known prescriptions of the *Elohistic* code of laws?

Under the pre-exilic theocracy, the great man was the Prophet. Moses, the first Prophet, was the organizer of the chosen people, and his successors, the Prophets, were the organs of the divine will. They were the men of God. Now, if the religious institutions to which they frequently allude had had or claimed a Mosaic origin, the name of the great lawgiver would have often occurred in their writings. They would appeal to him against the abuses they condemn. They would clothe their reforms with the authority of his name. They would be the

first to demand respect for the Mosaic ritual and to explain it, by disentangling from the letter which kills the spirit which makes alive. Instead of this, the name of Moses scarcely occurs once or twice in all their works. They do not represent him as a lawgiver. He is the "Prophet" (*Hos.* xii. 14) who brought Israel out of Egypt. Samuel is put on a level with him (*Jerem.* xv. 1).

The Prophets frequently refer to the history of Moses' time. How comes it that they say never a word of the great institutions of the Priestly Code? It is not till we come to Jeremiah that we find any allusion to a written law, and there we know he is alluding to *Deuteronomy*.

The word *Torah* is undoubtedly used repeatedly in their writings, but, to say nothing of the Book of the Covenant, whose unquestioned antiquity would explain the use of the word *Torah* in the sense of *law*, we need only collect the various passages where the word is used by early writers to see that the Prophets understood by it the whole body of Mosaic and Prophetic Traditions lying at the base of revealed religion. The Prophets refer to the *Torah* as the Apostles do to the Gospel.

This *Torah* of the Prophets is summed up in *Deuteronomy* in the words "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Religion and morality, love for God and for fellow-man, were the foundations of the religion they preached. That was the *Torah* in whose name they fought energetically against the ever-growing tendency to imprison religion in external ritual and reduce worship to vain practices which appealed to the eyes and senses but left the heart "uncircumcised." Every tendency of their age conspired to exaggerate the importance of the externals of worship. But the reverence felt for those ceremonies did not arise from a belief that they were commanded by Moses or Jehovah Himself; it was due to the notion that Jehovah must be worshipped as other gods were, and that the richer the sacrifices and the more magnificent the rites, the better pleased He must be.

Now, among the chosen people such an attitude was not, as among the heathen, the result of ignorant superstition. It betrayed a secret concession to the natural weakness of the human soul, which is ever prone to elude the stern demands of a worship "in spirit and truth," the only kind of worship which God requires. The Prophets, who were the apostles of the revealed religion, saw that Israel, with all their human rites, were deserting the covenant of Jehovah and reverting to idolatry. Hence their insistence on the worthlessness of the material and formal religion growing up in the shadow of the Temple.

Jesus Christ, wishing to impress on the Pharisees that their religion, being composed of human traditions, made the commandment of God "of none effect," borrowed His severest strictures from the Prophet Isaiah: "This people knoweth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."

Compare with these words *Amos* v. 21; *Jerem.* vii. 4, viii. 8, etc. The Prophets do not attack a form of ritual ascribed to Moses, nor do they distinguish between the ritual itself and the wrong use made of it. On the contrary, they protest against a merely external religion. They assert that God demands nothing of the kind. They fly in the face of all the prejudices of their age, and defy their contemporaries to quote a single rite invested with divine authority, calling them all mere human inventions.

Would they have spoken thus if the Mosaic law had existed? What if their

hearers had been able to hold up the Priestly Code and say to them : " You ask us where is the law in which God commands gifts, sacrifices, feasts, assemblies and ceremonies,—There it is ! " ?

### *B. Systematic History.*

The Priestly Code represents the earliest attempt at a logical theory of history. Its aim is to show how God, by a progressive revelation, founded the theocracy, and how all the events of the past converge towards the supreme moment of history, the institution of the Mosaic worship. It completely ignores certain highly important narratives ; says not a word of the Fall, Cain and Abel, the call of Abraham, or the nomad life of the Patriarchs, who, according to its own view, remained fixed at Hebron ; not a word of the altars or sacrifices of the Patriarchal epoch ; not a word of the sanctuaries of Israel or the religious traditions of the northern kingdom. All these facts recorded in the other documents could not have failed in this case to be an encumbrance. On the other hand, it attached the highest importance to chronologies, because they enabled it to prove that the theocratic institutions were really the goal of the whole development of humanity.

The theocracy was founded by Moses. As the Mosaic was preceded by the Patriarchal age, and the Covenant of Sinai is no more than the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham (*Gen.* xvii. 7), it was important to show that Moses was directly descended from Abraham. This the Priestly Code does with faultless precision. It knows not only the names from father to son, but also the ages of all the heads of families, between the Patriarch and the lawgiver (*Exod.* vi.).

Meanwhile the covenant with Abraham was preceded by God's covenant with Noah. The Priestly Code proves that Abraham is descended from Noah in the eldest line. Here not only all names and ages without exception have been preserved, but even the dates of births (*Gen.* v. and xi.).

Finally, to show by what method of providential selection the chosen people is connected with the beginnings of mankind, a genealogical tree would be required, going back to the first man and showing that Noah is really the head of the eldest branch of the human family. Such a genealogy is made out by the priestly writer, who knows all the names and all the dates of the antediluvian epoch.

Thus the theocratic nation is equipped with all its patents of nobility. Truly, Israel has the pre-eminence over all the nations of the earth. Adam is really the first Jew.

The Priestly Code is not content with establishing the pedigree of the theocracy. In its rapid review of the past, it avoids mentioning anything that might stain the brilliant genealogy. It would appear, from the book, which knows nothing of those painful first steps of the human race, that the ancestors of the chosen race, from Adam to Noah, enjoyed a peace and prosperity which are reminiscent of the golden age. It was not, in this view, by a special call that Abraham obtained his privileges, by responding to an invitation of grace with an act of faith. No, it was simply because he was the son of Terah, the descendant of Noah in the eldest line, and therefore the legitimate representative of the faithful and privileged branch of humanity.

In the story of the Patriarchs, the Priestly Code avoids all the facts which might set the ancestors of the chosen people in an unfavourable light.

The central event of the closing days of the Exile, from the theocratic point of



view, was the institution of the Passover and Feast of unleavened bread (*Mazzoth*). Accordingly on this the attention of the priestly writer especially fastens. In the brief notices of the journey through the wilderness the author attaches importance to nothing but what concerns the numbering of the people and the future organization of the theocratic state. Careful notice is taken of all the facts relating to the worship and the priesthood, as for instance, the revolt of Korah against the prerogatives of Aaron and the miracle intended to strengthen the respect for them in the minds of the people.

The reader feels that everywhere the author's aim is not so much to write a history as to introduce a body of laws, and that body of laws, which really constitutes the bulk of the work, betrays the same peculiarities as the history. Whereas the other documents, viewing the past from the religious standpoint, present the laws of Sinai as the foundation of a religious and moral covenant, the *First Elohist*, or writer of the Priestly Code, writing the history of the theocracy, sees above all, in the revelation received by Moses, a collection of ritual and priestly regulations. There is no wish here, as in the Book of the Covenant, to educate Israel, or to convert it, as in *Deuteronomy*, but simply to establish it in the possession of the theocratic constitution through which the chosen people will at last witness the fulfilment of the divine promises. When Israel, gathered around a single sanctuary, shall have raised their Temple, enthroned Aaron, instituted their sacrifices and organized their feasts, God will have reached His goal, creation will be complete, God's people will be born.

The Priestly Code is not without real greatness. It sets systematically to work to disentangle from passing events the great lesson of history and to bring into high relief, by the deliberate sacrifice of all irrelevant facts, the picture of a nation in which is concentrated the history of the whole world. That is the whole secret of the book.

### *C. Priestly Organization and Privileges.*

With the advent of the laws contained in the Priestly Code, the recommendation not to forget the Levite becomes quite superfluous. The reader even feels inclined to appeal to the privileged caste to moderate its appetite.

Everything in these laws seems to have been planned with a view to making the clergy as rich as it was powerful. True, the Priestly Code repeats the formula of *Deuteronomy* which denies all land to the sons of Levi, and makes Jehovah their inheritance. But the phrase is applied unmistakably only to the sons of Aaron, and besides, as transformed by the new legislation, the heritage of Jehovah becomes for the priests a truly royal endowment. It comprises in the first place forty-eight towns, unknown to *Deuteronomy*, which must be surrendered to the Levites by the people of Israel in order that they may fix their abode there. The surrounding fields must also be given to the Levites "for their cattle, and for their substance, and for all their beasts" (*Num.* xxxv. 3).

The performance of sacrifices is to entitle the sons of Aaron to keep for themselves all the victims of the *Terumoth*, i.e. heave-offerings: oxen, sheep, goats, etc. "Thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, . . . and the flesh of them shall be thine" (*Num.* xviii. 17, 18). To the priest also belong the skin of burnt offerings (*Levit.* vii. 8), all meat offerings or *Shelamim* (*Levit.* vii. 9-14), the breast and right thigh in peace offerings and offerings of consecration (*Levit.* vii. 31, 32; cf. viii. 29, and *Exod.* xxix. 27). In a Nazirite's offerings, the priest

shall take the shoulder of the ram, an unleavened cake and an unleavened wafer, besides his usual dues (*Num.* vi. 19). Finally, in the case of "most holy things," everything not consumed by the fire (*Num.* xviii. 9) belongs entirely to the priests, viz. meat-offerings (*Levit.* ii. 3-10, v. 13, vi. 9, x. 12), sin-offerings (*Levit.* v. 13, vii. 6, xiv. 13; cf. *Num.* v. 8), guilt-offerings (*Levit.* vi. 19, 22, vii. 7, x. 17, xiv. 13), and the shewbread (*Levit.* xxiv. 9). All this must be eaten in a holy place (*Levit.* x. 13) by the sons of Aaron only (*Num.* xviii. 11, *Levit.* x. 13-15; cf. *Levit.* xxii. 10).

All first-fruits (*Num.* xviii. 12), all the first-born, of man or beast (*Num.* xviii. 15), are the property of the priests. There is no question here of devoting the firstlings of the cattle to joyous feasts to which the Levite is bidden. Everything belongs to the priest, and to the priest alone. The first-born of man brings in to the priest five shekels of silver (*Num.* xviii. 16). Every person, animal or property "devoted" belongs to the priest (*Num.* xviii. 14; cf. *Levit.* xxvii. 28). The fields which fail to be redeemed in the year of jubilee fall to the priests (*Levit.* xxvii. 21). To the priests also belong the tithe of the revenues of all the Levites (*Num.* xviii. 24), and  $\frac{1}{10}$ th part of the soldiers' portion of the spoils of war (*Num.* xxxi. 28). Thus after the victory over the Midianites (*Num.* xxxi. 1-12) the priests received as "Jehovah's tribute," 675 sheep, 72 oxen, 61 asses, and 32 slaves (*Num.* xxxi. 36-40).

Cities, fields, herds, slaves, money, sacrificial victims, and "extras" of all sorts, such, according to the Priestly Code, were the revenues of the sons of Aaron.

Less richly paid than their masters, the Levites received as their salary "the tithe of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave-offering unto Jehovah" (*Num.* xviii. 24), "all the tithe in Israel" (*Num.* xviii. 21, *Levit.* xxvii. 30-33). That represents a very fair sum, although as vassals they were obliged to pay a tenth of their tithe to the priests (*Num.* xviii. 25). Once this condition is fulfilled, the Levites may eat their portion with their households in any place without any fear of profaning the offerings of the children of Israel (*Num.* xviii. 31, 32).

Besides, the Levites can on occasion make enormous profits whenever the fortune of war favours Israel. The law allows them 2 per cent. on the part of the spoil assigned to the people. In the war against Midian, they thus obtained 6750 sheep, 720 oxen, 610 asses, and 320 slaves (*Num.* xxxi. 30-47).

It is scarcely necessary to point out the numerous discrepancies and contradictions brought to light by a comparison of the laws of *Deuteronomy* and of the Priestly Code respecting priests and Levites. The priest-Levite, with his meagre profits, his simple functions and his intimacy with the people represents an age in which the theocracy had not yet reached the conception of the priests, sons of Aaron, with their enormous incomes and powerful hierarchy. *Deuteronomy*, in demanding the centralization of worship, seeks to ameliorate the lot of the clergy. The Priestly Code shows us a state of affairs in which the centralization urged by *Deuteronomy* has borne fruit. It was only to be expected that, the suppression of the high places depriving provincial Levites of their livelihood, a crowd of priests would besiege Jerusalem, and that on the other hand the Levitical family in office at Jerusalem would object to share its rights and would strenuously defend them. The natural result of this was the hierarchy. In this the earliest holders formed the upper caste, and the chief of that caste, who was the general of a whole army of priests and subordinates, became the supreme pontiff of the centralized religion.

## APPENDIX VII.

## EZRA.

Ezra was impelled by the national craving for harmonization and compilation, of which the literary history of the Pentateuch has already furnished two examples : (1) The fusion of the *Second Elohist* with the *Jehovist* in a single work which we call the *Prophetic Tradition*; (2) The fusion of that *Prophetic Tradition* with *Deuteronomy* during the first years of the exile at Babylon. In order to give the Pentateuch its final form, it remained only to incorporate the Priestly Code into the already existing combination. This was what Ezra did about a century later. Thanks to this important work he was looked upon in after ages as a second Moses, the restorer of the Law and the framer of the Pentateuch.

Rabbinical literature sets Ezra on a level with Moses. In their eagerness to connect the theology of the synagogue with the great Hebrew lawgiver, the Rabbis ascribe to Ezra not only the restoration of the Mosaic writings but also the revival of a mysterious doctrine of divine origin, which itself also goes back to Moses but must not be revealed to any but the lawyers of Israel. The legendary form of the tradition is to be found in *Esdras* II. xiv. 19-48.

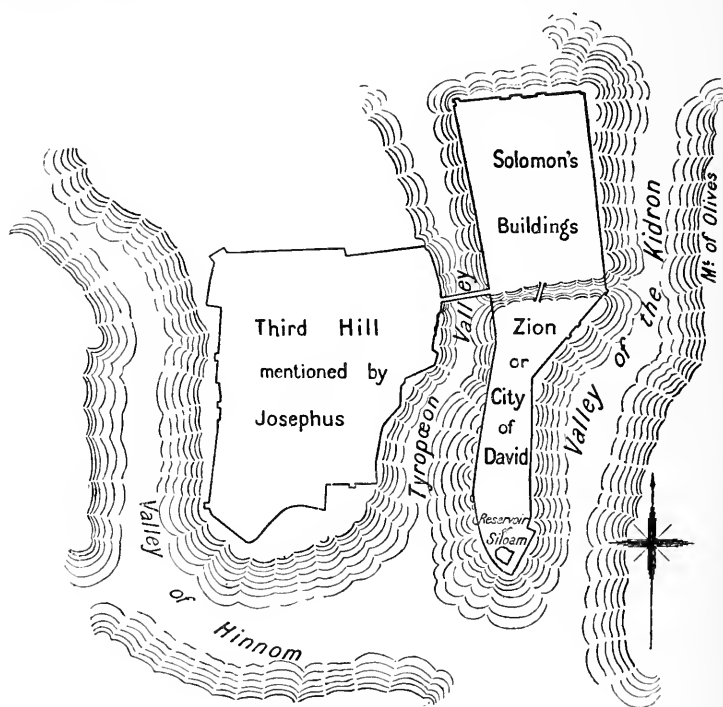
"Then answered I [Esdras] and said, . . . They that shall be born afterward, who shall admonish them? for the world is set in darkness, and they that dwell therein are without light. . . . And he answered me and said, Go thy way, gather the people together, and say unto them, that they seek thee not for forty days. But look thou prepare thee many tablets, and take with thee Sarea, Dabria, Selemia, Ethanus, and Asiel, these five, which are ready to write swiftly. . . . And it came to pass on the morrow that, lo, a voice called me, saying, Esdras, open thy mouth and drink that I give thee to drink. Then opened I my mouth, and, behold, there was reached unto me a full cup, which was full as it were with water, but the colour of it was like fire. And I took it, and drank : and when I had drunk of it, my heart uttered understanding, and wisdom grew in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory : and my mouth was opened, and shut no more. The Most High gave understanding unto the five men, and they wrote by course the things that were told them, in characters which they knew not, and they sat forty days. . . . So in forty days were written fourscore and fourteen books. And it came to pass, when the forty days were fulfilled, that the Most High spake unto me, saying, The first that thou hast written publish openly, and let the worthy and unworthy read it : but keep the seventy last, that thou mayest deliver them to such as be wise among thy people : for in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the stream of knowledge. And I did so."

If we retain the substance of this apocryphal narrative, which is that Judaism is indebted to the scribe Ezra for the five books of Moses in their canonical form, we shall possess the most natural explanation of Ezra's long-enjoyed reputation and of the manner in which the Priestly Code and the Prophetic portions of the Pentateuch were combined in a single book.

## APPENDIX VIII.

## PLAN OF JERUSALEM UNDER THE KINGS.

The original city was Zion, or the city of David, the ancient Jebusite fortress, naturally protected by the deep valleys surrounding it. This steep and narrow hill was traditionally regarded as the Mount Moriah where Abraham, the national ancestor, had received God's promise "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."



PLAN OF JERUSALEM  
(under the Kings).

The second hill, oval in shape, was, according to Josephus, the site on which Solomon erected his buildings at great cost.

Josephus mentions a third hill, more spacious and higher than the other two, looked upon by some Orientalists as the genuine hill of Zion, and described by Perrot and Chipiez (*op. cit.* p. 161) as the "Upper City, in process of formation under the early kings of Judah." There is no documentary evidence that this third hill was thickly populated before the Captivity. Of the many reasons against regarding this as the site of David's fortified castle, we need mention but one. The eastern hill (Zion) is naturally defended by ravines which must

originally have made it inaccessible, whereas the third hill is quite undefended on the north side, where it descends gradually in gentle slopes. After Jerusalem had established itself on all three hills and had bound them together by a girdle of walls, it was always at this vulnerable spot that attacks succeeded in bringing about the city's fall. By this way the Crusaders entered; here Titus had established his headquarters before the capture of the Temple. Already before this the breach made by the Chaldæans was made on the north side (*2 Kings* xxv. 4). Neither Jebus nor Zion would ever have won the reputation of being impregnable had they stood between Hinnom and Tyropœon. The first hill had moreover the unique advantage of a spring on its eastern slope, which flowed even in the heat of summer and fed the reservoir of Siloam.

## APPENDIX IX.

## THE APOCRYPHA.

The names of the books are as follows :

I. and II. Esdras.	Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah.
Tobit.	The Song of the Three Holy Children.
Judith.	The History of Susanna.
The rest of Esther.	Bel and the Dragon.
The Wisdom of Solomon.	The Prayer of Manasses.
Ecclesiasticus.	I. and II. Maccabees.

These fourteen books were included in the Authorized Version of the Bible as originally issued in 1611, but are now generally omitted. There are others, namely, III. and IV. Maccabees, The Book of Enoch, The Psalms (18) of Solomon, and an additional (151st) Psalm of David, besides pseudepigraphic books such as The Apocalypse of Baruch and the Assumption of Moses.

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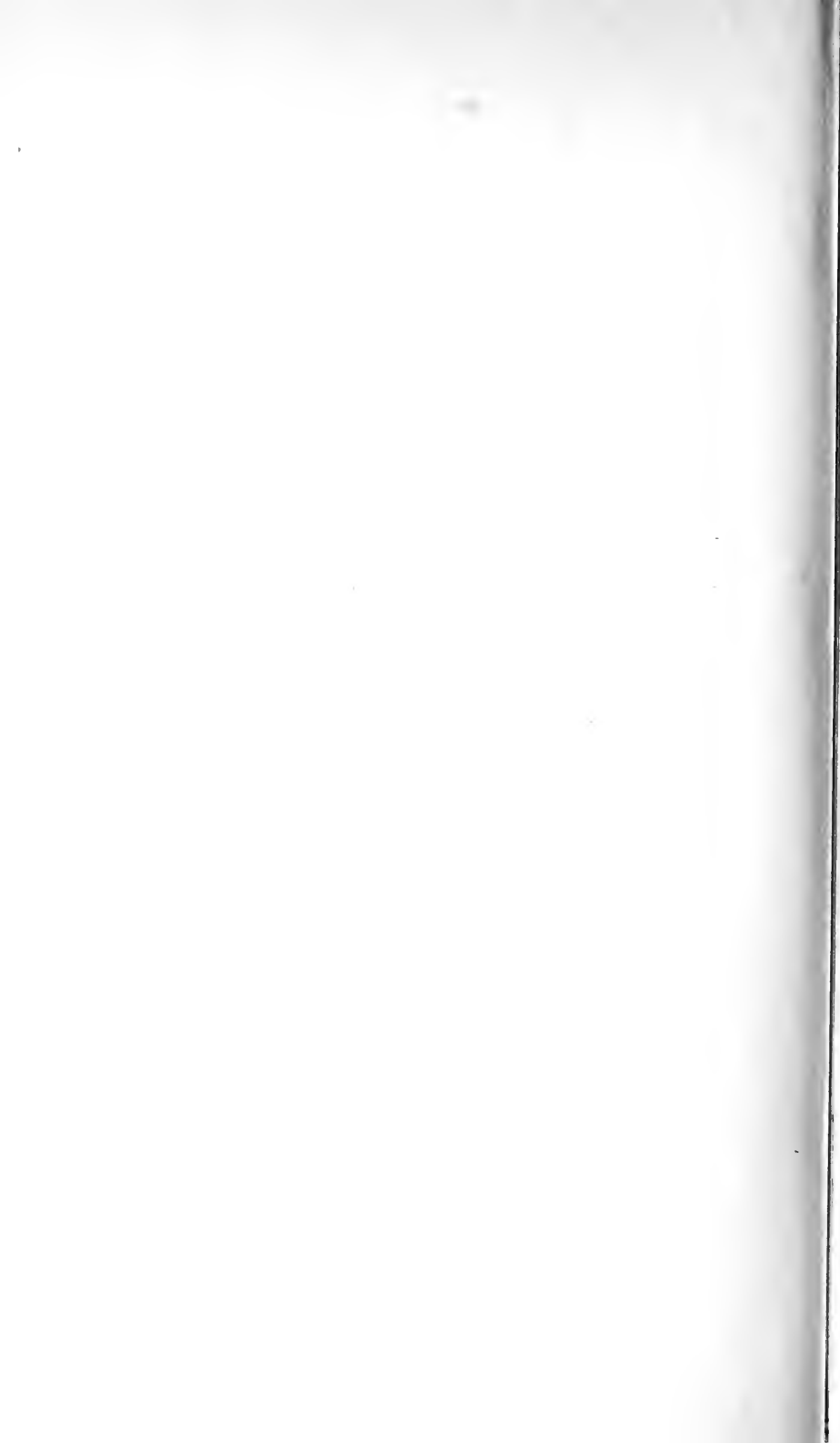
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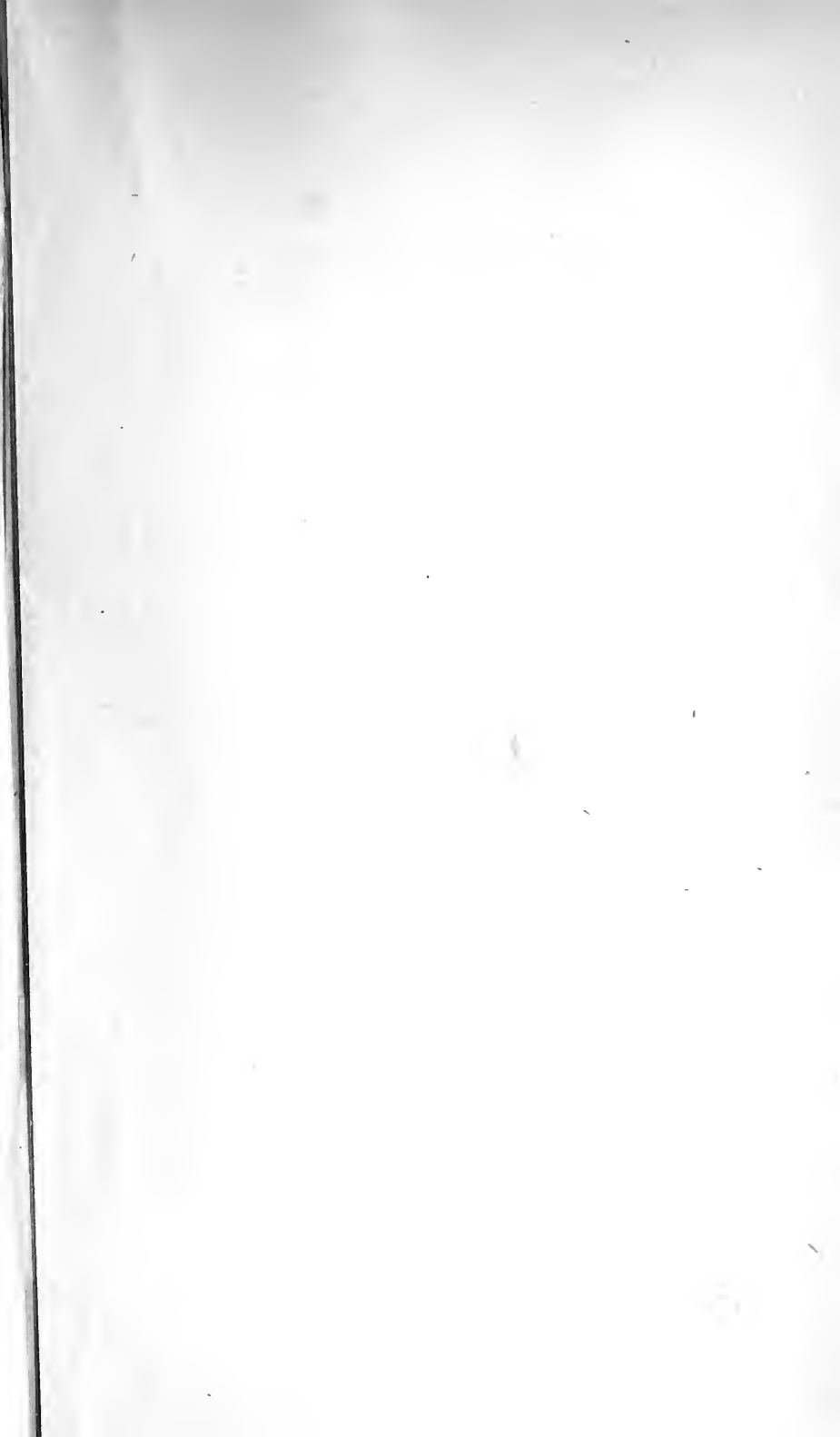
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